The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXV NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1932 No. 3520

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Subscription Rates: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States; to Canada, $5.50; and to other foreign countries, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: Nation, New York. British Agent for Subscriptions and Advertising, Miss Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London W. C. 1, England.

HOW COMPLETELY FUTILE a lame-duck session of Congress can be is being demonstrated in Washington today. A deadlock between the discredited man in the White House and the Democrats on Capitol Hill has already developed. The present session seems likely to drag on, until it automatically expires in March, without accomplishing much if anything of consequence. This feeling is reflected in the President's annual message to Congress. Mr. Hoover says little that is new, and that little he puts forward wearily, without conviction. He advocates a reform of the banking system and recommends a manufacturers' sales tax as a source of revenue. No suggestion aroused any enthusiasm in Congress. The Democratic majority in the House is clearly not disposed to accept any of Mr. Hoover's major recommendations, while the Democrats in the Senate have already decided that they will not confirm the appointment by the President of any officials whose terms expire after March 4. It has been intimated that Mr. Hoover, for his part, will veto all legislation of Democratic origin, especially any dealing with unemployment or farm relief, which does not fit in with his notion of rugged American individualism. At the moment it seems as if Congress would do no more than pass the continuing resolutions necessary to extend the life of the current appropriations measures until the new Congress shall have had time to adopt a budget for the coming fiscal year. Happily, this will be our last lame-duck session. The Norris amendment abolishing such sessions has already been ratified by more than twenty States and by the end of January will almost certainly have been approved by the required thirty-six legislatures.

THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE has been saved again, this time by a five-Power agreement not published in full at this writing. It appears, however, that Great Britain, the United States, France, Italy, and Germany have signed a declaration indorsing the principle of "simultaneous equality of status" for Germany and of security for France. One delegate is quoted as saying that "this does not mean the success of disarmament, but does avoid its failure." Precisely. If this had not been put through, the conference in all probability would have collapsed. The present agreement insures the return of Germany to the conference, and constitutes from that point of view a great success for the German offensive begun by the Von Papen Government. It will doubtless encourage the Reich to be more aggressive hereafter in its demands for the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and especially for the abolition of the Polish Corridor. Meanwhile, we eagerly await the exact text of this agreement in order that we may know just how far the United States has been committed on the question of security to France. The Hoover Government has thus far stood up very straight in refusing to enter into any treaty or obligation which would compel us to come to France's rescue whenever and however that country might decide to engage in war. No agreement signed by Norman Davis should in any way obligate us to be ready to guarantee France's safety. At least, however, Mr. Davis has something to bring home as a result of his months of zealous and patient effort; the credit for the agreement seems to belong to Ramsay MacDonald, who finally put it through.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS has again refused to take positive action against Japan for its violation of the peace treaties. The smaller Powers, especially Czecho-Slovakia, the Irish Free State, Spain, and Sweden, wanted to get down to cases without further delay, but their resolution condemning Japan on the basis of the Lytton Commission's findings was quickly buried in an obscure committee. Instead of acting favorably upon this resolution the League Assembly referred the entire Manchurian question to a special Committee of Nineteen. The new investigating committee is to study the Lytton report and draw up proposals for a settlement of the controversy. This cowardly procedure deceives no one. It simply means additional delay at a most critical time. What can the Committee of Nineteen learn that the Lytton Commission was unable to discover for itself in a year of intensive investigation and study? What proposals for a settlement could the committee agree upon that would differ very materially from the Lytton Commission's recommendations? The League is clearly, and perhaps deliberately, playing into Japan's hands. At least that country alone stands to profit by the League's repeated refusal to face the basic issue. Japan needs time in which to consolidate its

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position in Manchuria, and the more time it gains the more difficult will it be to pry the Japanese loose from their unlawful gains or to bring them to book for their brazen violation of the League Covenant, the Nine-Power Pacific Treaty, and the Kellogg Pact. England and France must bear their full share of the responsibility for these results, for by their inaction they have sabotaged the Covenant and the Kellogg Pact at almost every turn in the Manchurian dispute.

JAPAN HAS NOW COME FORWARD with a naval-disarmament scheme of its own. While the Japanese plan contemplates what appear to be important reductions in the naval strength of the leading Powers, its real motive is altogether too transparent. A careful reading reveals that the plan, through manipulation of the various categories of naval ships, would give Japan not only all the security it requires in the Far East, but additional offensive power in the Pacific area. In Washington the Japanese proposals were promptly denounced as "fantastic and impossible of acceptance, even as a basis for discussion." In its eagerness to strengthen itself in Asia at the expense of other Powers with interests in that region, Japan imperils the delicate balance of power set up with great care at the Washington Conference for the specific purpose of preserving the peace of the Pacific area. Perhaps, however, Tokio was no more serious in announcing its plan than Washington and London have been in accepting that announcement. It has been suggested that the Japanese brought out their naval scheme at this time to complicate the Manchurian negotiations. To us it appears rather that Japan, encouraged by the League's procrastination in the Manchurian question, has now taken the next logical step in its program of imperialistic expansion.

DENMARK APPEARS to be about the only country in the world that has managed to retain its sanity in the economic storm. It was the first, and still is the only, nation even to consider disarming itself. Now the government at Copenhagen plans to remove many of the restrictions on Danish foreign trade, in refreshing contrast to the attitude of other governments, which are constantly creating new barriers against trade or are adding to the barriers already existing. Under the present system the Danish government controls the flow of imports by requiring importers to take out "currency licenses." The new plan would place at least 35 per cent of the imports in a special group requiring no such licenses. Articles in this group would enter the country without restriction of any kind. The decline in the value of Danish currency will continue to operate as a barrier against American products, but the government proposes to adopt special regulations to facilitate the importation of certain goods from the United States, especially automobiles. The Danish government is proceeding cautiously of course. Only with great difficulty, in the face of the rising tide of economic nationalism elsewhere, could it abolish at once all measures protecting its trade. It is most heartening to find at least one country with courage to move in the right direction.

GERMANY HAS ENDED its Mooney case after Walther Bullerjahn had served more than six years of a fifteen years' sentence in the penitentiary for high treason. In December, 1925, the Supreme Court rejected Bullerjahn's appeal from the decision of the lower court that he had betrayed a hidden store of arms to the Inter-Allied Military Commission when in December, 1924, it searched the plant of a company in Berlin in which he was employed as a supervisor. That seemed to end the case, but the League for Human Rights fought on precisely as has the Mooney Committee, and finally succeeded in getting the Supreme Court to hear the case again and reverse its own decision. Bullerjahn was convicted on the testimony of a certain Baron Paul von Gontard, the general director of the company, who declared that information that Bullerjahn had betrayed the hidden arms to the commission was given to him by a certain French lieutenant by the name of Jost. Three times the League for Human Rights appealed to French premiers, asking that Lieutenant Jost be permitted to testify; each time permission was denied. When Baron von Gontard was reexamined in the retrial of the case, according to the London *Daily Mail,* he testified that it was an English officer whose name he could not remember who made the accusation against Bullerjahn. Thus has been won a case which for years has had the sympathy of the liberal German press. Meanwhile, our own Mooney continues in jail.

MACHINE-GUNS WERE USED by a sheriff's posse in evicting a farm family from their home in Wisconsin. Fortunately, no one was injured, although hundreds of shots were fired on both sides. Throughout the Middle West the tension between the farmers and authorities has been growing in recent months as a result of tax and foreclosure sales. In many cases evictions have been prevented only by mass action on the part of the farmers. However, until the Cichon homestead near Elkhorn, Wisconsin, was besieged on December 6 by a host of deputy sheriffs armed with machine-guns, rifles, shotguns, and tear-gas bombs, there had been no actual violence. Max Cichon's property was auctioned off at a foreclosure sale last August, but he refused to allow either the buyer or the authorities to approach his home. He built a barbed-wire entanglement around the buildings and held off unwelcome visitors with a shotgun. The sheriff called upon Cichon to submit peacefully. When he refused to do so, the sheriff ordered deputies to lay down a barrage of machine-gun and rifle fire. The battle lasted twenty minutes. Cichon is now in jail in Elkhorn, and his wife and two children, who were with him in the house, are being cared for in the county hospital. Cichon is not a trouble-maker. He enjoys the confidence and respect of his neighbors, who only recently elected him justice of the peace of the town of Sugar Creek. That a man of his standing and disposition should go to such lengths in defying the authorities is a clear warning that we may expect further trouble in the agricultural districts unless the farmers are soon helped.

IN NEW YORK CITY during the first ten months of 1932 the staggering number of 259,602 summary dispossess proceedings were instituted in the municipal courts of the city. In other words, more than a quarter of a million families, involving surely a million people, have in less than a year been faced with eviction from their homes for failure to pay rent. The figures are almost unbelievable; one shrinks from translating them into terms of human misery. They offer a useful index of the absolute destitution in New York, though undoubtedly they fail to indicate its full extent. Many thousands of families, unable to meet their rent, have

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been allowed to remain by decent landlords—or by landlords who despair of finding tenants who can pay. The situation is so acute that the Bronx Tenants Emergency League has written a letter to Governor Roosevelt, citing the figures and urging—"in behalf of more than 60,000 destitute families against whom dispossess proceedings have been instituted this year in the Bronx alone"—several measures to be acted upon by the special session of the New York Legislature now in progress. It asks that the courts be required to grant an unemployed tenant a stay of six months in the execution of a warrant of eviction instead of the present five-day stay. It asks that a landlord initiating dispossess proceedings be required to prove that he has a prospective tenant for the apartment in question and that there are no similar vacancies in the same house. It asks finally that the State and city each appropriate $20,000,000 for the direct payment of the rent of unemployed persons who, in spite of these restrictions, may be faced with eviction. Certainly some such measures should be taken to meet a housing crisis that is more acute than the situation existing in 1920 when the emergency rent laws were put through. The cause today is different but the suffering is even more widespread and intense.

THE MASSACHUSETTS BRANCH of the League of Nations Association has sent us an interesting compilation of the results of a number of referendums held in Massachusetts on the day of the Presidential election to ascertain the feeling of eleven communities as to whether the United States should enter the League of Nations. Of these eleven communities, every one was carried by the League advocates, and 63 per cent of the total vote cast was on the side of the affirmative. It is to be noted, however, that while 63,034 persons voted for the Presidential candidate, only 64 per cent, or 40,510, took the trouble to signify their wishes as to the League. Of these, 25,631 approved, and 14,879 were opposed. This recalls the reversal of the vote of 1926 in Malden, when that town voted 5,763 against our entering the League to 3,239 in favor. Two years ago 6,050 voters favored the League and 5,490 were opposed. While Malden did not vote this year, the change in the other towns would seem to indicate that the majority in favor of the League in Malden would this year have been 7 or 8 per cent higher. These may be only straws, but it is at least gratifying to know that in Massachusetts they are getting into the habit of voting on international questions.

CAROLINE STEVENS WITTPENN, who died in Hoboken on December 4, was without doubt the foremost citizen of New Jersey. Indeed, it is questionable whether any single individual in the United States has done more work for social welfare than Mrs. Wittpenn. In her seventy-fourth year, until the time of her death, she was still active in fifty-two social groups, and at one time was associated with no less than ninety social-service organizations. To these she not only gave so generously of her means as to draw heavily upon her capital, but contributed most intelligent and high-minded interest and direction. Merely to list the organizations through which she personally accomplished changes in the social agencies of the State, and bettered the lot of orphans, paupers, the insane, and the criminal, would fill more than a page of *The Nation*. Largely because of her efforts the State Board of Children's Guardians was appointed and the State Reformatory for first offenders established at Rahway. For many years she was an assistant probation officer of Hudson County, and a member of the Probation Board. Mrs. Wittpenn was twice a member of the American delegation to the International Conference on Crime and Prevention in Switzerland, and twice appointed to the International Prison Commission. Never was there a woman of means who felt more keenly the responsibility that wealth should impose upon those who are advantaged by it to serve the public, not spasmodically, or when the drums are beating, but day by day, year in and year out. It need only be added that this service was enhanced by a rare and charming personality.

A GREAT INJUSTICE seems to have been done to the American Consul General in Berlin, George S. Messersmith, in connection with the Einstein case. It now appears that that official was not in Berlin but in Breslau when the incident occurred, and it is asserted that the consulate treated Professor Einstein with all consideration. This raises a clear-cut issue of veracity between the consulate and the press associations and special correspondents in Berlin. We can hardly believe that it was all a mare's nest in view of the direct quotations of indignation attributed to both Professor Einstein and his wife. We are happy, however, to have the Consul General himself cleared, because he has the reputation of being one of the most intelligent and liberal men in the service, to which he has belonged for some nineteen years. The real guilt lies, of course, with a government which is so incredibly stupid and narrow as to compel its consuls to cross-examine applicants for visas on their political and economic views, and with a State Department which forwards to Europe for action any complaint which comes from an unrepresentative and silly organization like the Woman Patriot Corporation. It would certainly not feel a similar obligation to act on protests from liberal or radical organizations in America. The whole procedure is the more indefensible because of its futility. We venture to say that it is keeping out neither anarchists nor Bolshevists while it is constantly degrading us in the eyes of other nations.

THE AUTHORITIES of Girton College, Cambridge, have announced that a woman student is likely "to wish to talk with a man student" and that "in her social relationships she is to be trusted." Accordingly, from now on, Girton students may visit Cambridge men in their college rooms or in lodgings without chaperones. This revolution has occurred peaceably, without riots or petitions, but it is a revolution none the less. At Oxford things are different. Somerville girls must have chaperones present when young men come to tea, even in the particular room consecrated to tea drinking. They may not motor with a man unprotected; they must receive permission before accepting an invitation to go boating. It is fair to admit that American women's colleges resemble Oxford in this regard more closely than they do Cambridge. Discipline is generally called upon to supplement training and good sense in matters of behavior. There will be many a college president and dean of women, here and in England, who will watch with interest and skepticism the Cambridge experiment in treating college women like mature persons instead of like delicate, and apparently very frail, flowers.

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Taxes or Economies?

IN more than one respect the President's budget message is an unreal document. Though his policies have been repudiated at the polls, Mr. Hoover finds himself compelled to recommend new taxes and new reductions of expenditures to apply not merely to the remainder of his own term but for sixteen months beyond that. Under the circumstances it should hardly cause surprise if Congress fails to pay very careful consideration to his program. It seems more profitable, therefore, instead of taking the President's message as a point of departure, to look at the federal budget problem afresh and in a broader perspective.

In such a perspective the dominating factor is the appalling shrinkage in the income of the American people. That income was estimated in 1929 to be about $85,200,000,000 a year. It has fallen violently in each year since then, and *Bradstreet's Weekly* estimates that in the current calendar year it will reach only $37,500,000,000. The American people, in other words, now have only $44 of income for every $100 they had before the collapse. A load of federal, State, and local taxation that was burdensome even in the New Era has now become close to intolerable. The real problem is obviously to reduce that tax burden. Yet this problem is receiving dishearteningly little attention, not only in Congress, but outside it. Those who are shouting most loudly that we must balance the budget appear to believe that their demand is equivalent to a demand for heavier tax levies. All realistic comment must recognize, of course, the immensely greater political obstacles in the way of a reduction of expenditures as compared with an increase in taxes. Recognition of these obstacles, however, does not mean that we should timidly abandon our efforts in that direction.

So far our failure as a nation to confront this issue has been complete. The figures speak for themselves. If our federal expenditures had been reduced in proportion to the national income they would now be running at the rate of only 44 per cent of those in 1932. Instead of a reduction of 56 per cent, however, there has been a substantial increase. In the fiscal year ending last June, federal expenditures reached $5,000,000,000—30 per cent more than in 1929. In the current fiscal year the Treasury Department estimates that such expenditures will reach $4,269,000,000—still 11 per cent greater than in 1929. For the fiscal year 1934 the Treasury estimate is $3,975,000,000—$127,000,000 higher than in 1929.

Even when one has allowed for the fixed charges on the public debt, and for the desirable increase in appropriations for public works, the complete failure of Congress and the Administration to reduce expenditures of the regular departments remains a matter for grave concern. Let us consider, in their order, the three largest items as they appear in the estimates for expenditures in the current fiscal year:

Veterans' Administration	$838,000,000
War Department	$426,000,000
Navy Department	$356,000,000

The expenditures for the army and navy had not been at all reduced in 1932 below those in 1929, despite the fact that one would expect an almost automatic reduction through the fall in the price of supplies alone. Certainly the personnel of the army and navy could now be reduced through a complete shut-down on new enlistments if nothing else. In the Veterans' Bureau expenditures have greatly increased over the 1929 level, and will be even higher next year. Mr. Hoover has at least had the courage to touch on this subject. He recommends an end to some of the more flagrant payments to veterans, and estimates that this would save $127,000,000 a year. The National Economy League, however, asserts that $452,000,000 annually could be saved without any loss to veterans actually disabled in the war.

Anyone who seriously believes that the way to balance the budget is to reduce expenditures as far as possible rather than to increase tax returns must be prepared to accept the consequences of that belief and to state them candidly. Substantial reductions in federal expenditures cannot be made without some reduction in personnel and some cuts in the pay of those who remain employed. Where it is necessary, as it often will be, to drop unneeded employees, those dropped should be put on small unemployment allowances for a definite period or until they have been reemployed. For those retained, rates of pay must be reduced to correspond on the average with reductions in the cost of living. This reduction should preferably be graduated, running from perhaps 5 per cent on the lowest salaries to 20 per cent on the highest. President Hoover's proposal for a reduction of 11 per cent in federal salaries over $1,000 in addition to the present furlough system may be open to criticism in detail but seems reasonable enough in the result it aims at. The federal employees cannot remain indefinitely a class protected at the expense of every other class. When the income of American farmers has fallen one-third in one year alone, when total wages and salaries, as estimated by the American Federation of Labor, have fallen 47 per cent as compared with 1929, it hardly seems in the interests of social justice that one class—and that one supported by taxes on all the others—should not have its pay reduced at all. It is sometimes objected that such a pay cut would reduce purchasing power and so retard revival. This argument overlooks, first, that purchasing power must be measured in terms of goods and living standards and not in terms of money. To reduce the salaries of a given group no more than living costs have fallen is not to reduce the purchasing power of that group but simply to restore it to what it was. Further, the purchasing power removed from federal employees by such moderate salary reductions is returned to the great body of the taxpayers who have lost more.

On the side of revenues, there is nothing to be said in defense of the President's recommendation of a 2¼ per cent manufacturers' sales tax. The objections to such a tax have already been stated innumerable times. It is tantamount to a 2¼ per cent tax on everyone's income regardless of his income level. It is a tax on many of the necessities of life. It would affect the net income of various manufacturers in unpredictable ways. The need for revenue would be great even if all reasonable reductions in expenditures were made, but there are many alternatives to so dangerous an expedient.

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Repeal Comes First

WOULD it be wise to legalize the sale of beer and wine before the Eighteenth Amendment is repealed? We feel that it would not. We believe it would be a serious mistake for Congress to enact the Collier bill or any similar measure, even for the sake of the revenue it might produce, before adequate and conclusive consideration can be given to the liquor problem as a whole. To attack this problem piecemeal, as Congress is doing, will simply add to the difficulty of arriving at a proper solution and may serve in the end to defeat the repeal movement.

Let us suppose that the sale of beer is made lawful before the Eighteenth Amendment is done away with. What will be the most probable consequences of that act? In the first place, it will not have the slightest effect on the evils now existing. Legal beer will lessen very little, if at all, the present demand for hard liquor. The speakeasies we shall still have with us, and the bootleggers and racketeers as well. There can be little doubt that the latter will seek forcibly to invade the lawful beer trade. Indeed, the brewery interests have already informed government officials in Washington that if the sale of beer is legalized, steps must be taken at the same time to protect them from the racketeers. The enactment of the Collier bill would certainly put prohibition reform on trial. If this particular measure should fail to touch any of the present evils, there would be a tendency to discredit the whole movement. This would be especially true if any considerable time elapsed between the legalization of beer and the passage by Congress of a repeal resolution.

Secondly, there is grave danger that the sale of these light beverages will delay outright repeal. Once the demand for beer has been met, the modificationists will have little inclination to continue the fight for thoroughgoing reform. It must be remembered in this connection that while a repeal resolution may be put through Congress, it is by no means certain that thirty-six States can be found to ratify that resolution. The recent vote in Congress indicates pretty clearly that the South and some sections of the Middle West still lean toward prohibition. The ratification campaign will be endangered if the modificationists desert the movement, for they hold the balance of power between the drys and the repealists in many doubtful States, and it takes only thirteen such States to defeat repeal.

Lastly, there is a great deal of hypocrisy in the present agitation for beer of alcoholic content higher than that permitted under the Volstead Act. If the 2.75 per cent beer which the Collier bill promises is not in fact intoxicating, what point would there be in raising the alcoholic content to this percentage? To make the beverage more palatable or more nourishing? That, frankly, is not what the beer-drinkers want. If the 2.75 per cent beer failed to give them the "kick" they are looking for, the Collier reform would have no value for them. It would be a meaningless gesture. If, on the other hand, beer of this alcoholic content is in fact intoxicating, its sale would violate the Constitution so long as the Eighteenth Amendment remained valid. For Congress to legalize the sale of such beer would be nullification pure and simple. What the public wants is not nullification, but outright repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

We are glad that the House of Representatives refused to be steam-rollered into accepting the Democratic repeal plan. The dry minority, though unwittingly of course, acted in the best interests of the repeal movement when it refused to bow to Speaker Garner's demand for hasty action. *The Nation* no less than John Nance Garner wants the prohibition amendment abolished. On May 4, 1932, we said: "We shall continue to fight for rigid control and for the reeducation of the country in the direction of temperance. But for the moment this end must be subordinated to the question of repeal, and so must the question of what system shall take the place of the present rule by bootleggers. . . . The slate must be wiped clean before the new start is made." But the slate may not be wiped clean if Congress acts hastily, without proper consideration or adequate debate. The extremists in the prohibition ranks have not quit fighting by any means. They will seek every possible legal and political loophole through which to defeat repeal. It is imperative, therefore, that the repeal resolution be made legally and politically unassailable. Congress will need more than forty minutes in which to prepare and pass such a resolution.

Ships and Subsidies

THE annual report of the Postmaster General has the merit of recording squarely certain payments to steamship companies and aircraft lines as subsidies. That is what they are, and that is what they should be understood to be, and not merely over-payments for the carriage of mail. By indirection and, in a sense, misrepresentation a subsidy system has been fastened upon us, whereas again and again a straight-out subsidy proposal has been defeated in the Congress of the United States. Now the Postmaster General reports that in this year of intense crisis the amount of subsidies paid to steamships and aircraft have risen from $28,218,178 in 1930 to $42,252,210 in 1932. "In both cases," says Mr. Brown, "the primary object is the development of transportation systems considered by Congress to be vital to the nation's trade and defense, the provision of postal facilities being secondary and incidental." Although the postal deficit for the fiscal year ending June 20, 1932, was the staggering sum of $152,246,188, largely because of a falling off in postal receipts of $117,000,000 from the high point of 1930, the Postmaster General makes no recommendation whatever that there should be any limitation or reduction of the government's support of enterprises which could not maintain themselves for a day without government aid. This aid, of course, comes directly out of the taxpayers' pockets, and the present Postmaster General's hands are tied because the department has obligated itself by long-term contracts for ocean-mail transportation under which the government pays subventions to equalize the cost of operating American shipping with costs under foreign flags.

It this policy ever justifiable? Possibly, when it comes to moderate aid for a new form of transportation like that of the aircraft. As for supporting ships under the American flag merely in order to show the flag in foreign ports, that can only be justified on the ground of American vanity. The plea that it is for defense purposes is hollow if our signature to the Kellogg Pact means anything. Moreover, the sub-

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ventions are not based upon a deliberate plan for reinforcing our naval strength, or for troop transportation in war time. Ships are being built for the special purposes of the trades in which they are engaged and not especially for use in another war at some indefinite time in the future. None the less, the argument is again advanced that we should not only continue the existing subventions, but should increase the amounts now paid out by the government in the face of a disappearing income and heavily increased national expenditures. The wind-bag Senator from New York, Mr. Copeland—as opposed to the constructive Senator, Robert F. Wagner—assured the public again the other day that "American independence" depended upon an adequate American fleet. Only an adequate American merchant marine, he declared, will "prevent foreign monopoly and extortion." It is interesting to note that he accepts an adequate merchant marine "as a public utility operated for the benefit of all the people." Of course the subsidized ships do not serve the whole people; the subsidies merely guarantee certain profits to the shipowners. Senator Copeland's hoary old pretense that our prosperity depends upon shipping in American vessels was exploded generations ago. We were highly prosperous for generations, during which time our merchants shipped goods in accordance with the cheapest terms offered by bidders for our foreign trade. Sometimes these were Englishmen, sometimes Germans, sometimes Norwegians, and so on. Nobody claimed then that the American merchant would be better off if he shipped by American ships and then paid additional taxes out of his own pocket to keep those ships at sea.

The Shipping Board is also determined to carry on this policy. It wants still higher mail pay for ships with a speed in excess of 24 knots. It wants the army and navy transport service sold to private interests, the Panama Railroad Steamship Company, also, and would prevent foreign ships from making cruises from American ports without fixed destination. It admits that if it had not been for the government aid ladled out to private interests not many American steamship companies could have survived the depression. Meanwhile the Shipping Board is going out of the operating business, the number of lines still operated for it having been reduced from thirteen to nine. All but 96 of the 2,546 vessels once owned by the government have been sold, scrapped, or otherwise disposed of, or laid up. Those laid up, some 240, are also destined for the scrap heap. Thus is being wound up our tremendous war-time ship construction, which resulted in an outright loss to the taxpayers of billions of dollars to be charged against the winning of the war to end war. Even with all the sales to private operators, and the huge sums granted or lent to them, not only to build ships but to operate them on government account, American-flag lines carry only 34 per cent of the country's export business. The board, it is needless to say, neglected to add that the continuance of some of these American lines, thanks only to government pap, has had a great deal to do with the demoralization of the Atlantic trade. The weakest company in that trade is the United States Lines, whose flagship, the Leviathan, left New York recently with only 178 passengers, in number hardly one-fourth of the crew. But what of it? America must not be subjected to the horrible infamy of again sending its products abroad under other flags than our own—not if there is a taxpayer still left to be assessed.

Henpecked Immortals

THE Victorian Age believed in nothing more firmly than it believed in "the influence of a good woman." Our generation has its doubts and all previous generations had theirs. Indeed, the theory that the female is naturally purer than the male was largely a nineteenth-century invention, and the idea behind the double standard has generally been that the natural depravity of women makes it necessary to hold them more severely in check. Not only do lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds, but lilies are particularly prone to fester. Yet the Victorians held firmly to their original thesis that the lady was made of finer stuff than the male (or aboriginal brute), and there is considerable documentary evidence to support their contention.

Everybody knows how Lady Burton protected the reputation of Sir Richard by burning the manuscript to which he had devoted a considerable portion of his later years. Then, only a short time ago, it was revealed that Mrs. Clemens had stood with a blue pencil at the elbow of Mark Twain, and the discovery caused a good deal of indignation—which we did not share for the reason that we could not imagine how anyone who had become accustomed to Hemingway, Joyce, and Lawrence would be able to see much difference between a censored Twain manuscript and an uncensored one. Now, however, Professor Randall Stewart of Yale announces in the New York *Times* that an examination of the originals of Hawthorne's notebooks shows that Mrs. Hawthorne edited them so carefully that as a result of her "prudishness or false delicacy" the published version "seriously misrepresents his character and literary genius."

It seems that certain passages relating to sex were revised or omitted and that another in which he expressed his lack of respect for ministers of religion was also deleted. More or less homely words were often supplanted by more elegant ones, and when Hawthorne permitted himself the mild cynicism of wondering how a very loving pair of honeymooners would behave a year later, that speculation was also thrown out, along with a phrase in which he went so far as to imply that happiness might be a matter of luck. Nor was he allowed even the faintest suggestion of profanity. If he wrote "a devil of a brunette," his watchful lady changed it to a "mischief of a brunette," and if he said of another that she was "quick-tempered as the devil," the phrase became merely "very quick-tempered."

Poor Hawthorne! Even if he had been left to his own devices he would not have been so very scandalous. The man who returned blushing from a visit to Italy to proclaim that, whatever excuses the ancients may have had, there was no reason why another nude statue should ever be made was a man who could be trusted. Doubtless he cherished his mild cynicisms. Doubtless even his harmless "devils" gave him that pleasure to which every man has a right—the pleasure of feeling that he is a devil of a fellow. But like so many other Victorians, he had committed himself to a belief in the influence of a good woman and he had to pay the penalty. It is pleasant, however, to know that the industry of a professor has given back to Hawthorne his naughty words. May he rest in peace—at last.

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Joseph V. McKee, Reformer?

By EDWARD LEVINSON

WHEN Joseph V. McKee, Mayor of New York, delivered his impassioned plea for a crusade which would bring decent government to the sadly misruled city, his hearers at the annual dinner of the New York State Chamber of Commerce looked upon him as a messiah. Bankers, real-estate operators, business men crowded around the Mayor at the conclusion of his brief speech to voice their vigorous approval. Practically all the newspapers joined in editorial praise of the new crusader. Municipal reformers and fusion advocates, relegated to outer political darkness since the Mitchel administration almost two decades ago, immediately initiated a reform campaign. Leaders of local chambers of commerce, women's clubs, and civic associations joined the movement. A newspaper cartoonist pictured McKee as a knight in shining armor spearing the Tammany dragon. Certain reform groups, however, have held aloof waiting to see in what direction McKee would jump in 1933, and hoping, perhaps, that Al Smith might be willing to carry the spear in the next city election.

The role of reformer is a new one for Joseph V. McKee. Except within the last few months there has been little in his fairly long political career to distinguish him from the general run of New York's Democratic leaders. For a time he held an instructorship in Latin and Greek at Fordham University; this and a brief period as teacher at De Witt Clinton High School preceded his selection by the Bronx Democratic machine as a candidate for the lower house of the State legislature. He spent six years at Albany. His legislative service is best remembered for his attempt to bring down the maximum price of prize-fight tickets from $25 to $7. When the infamous ouster of the Socialist assemblymen was proposed, McKee urged that they be tried by the entire lower house rather than by a special committee—this during a period when even conservative Republican leaders with a sense of propriety denounced the entire procedure.

It was Governor Smith who called McKee from his place in the assembly to fill a vacancy on the City Court bench. He was reelected to serve for ten years. In summing up his experiences on the bench, McKee has declared that "being a judge indelibly impressed on my mind that there are always two sides to a question." A highly religious strain, which is noticeable especially in his utterances before student bodies, led him, when he first assumed judicial office, to ask an audience of Tammany leaders and heelers to pray for his success in his new job, and one of the few innovations introduced during his presidency of the Board of Aldermen was to have the meetings opened with prayer. In 1927 and again within recent months McKee took occasion to lash out at rowdy shows and he closed two burlesque houses for a short space of time. On one occasion, when certain movies seemed to him too broad in their handling of the idiosyncrasies of foreign elements in our population, Mr. McKee proposed an ordinance designed to clear New York's screens of all pictures that might offend racial groups.

Like his predecessor, though he is not so adept at the art, Mayor McKee appreciates the value of showmanship. He has repeatedly lavished rich but equal praise on every foreign-language group in New York City. In authentic Walker fashion he has extended the city's welcome to the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion, to bright little Japanese girls fresh from a young ladies' seminary, and to Sidney Franklin, Brooklyn's matador. To a delegation of school teachers seeking salary increases he once offered the consolation that not in many years had the aldermanic chamber seen "such a good-looking assemblage of women." As for the industrial breakdown, he considers that it has wrought "one of the greatest social revolutions in history. It has brought new ideals . . . men are lifting up their minds and hearts." A major cause of the depression, he feels, has been the excessive taxing of real estate.

McKee's apprenticeship in the Board of Estimate, where he sat for seven years as president of the Board of Aldermen, was a period of close cooperation with Mayor Walker. The ties were loosened only when Walker's star began to fade in the cold light of public exposure. McKee sat in on the proceedings which jammed through the Equitable Bus franchise, of malodorous fame. Only once in Walker's long and determined fight to swing the deal by which it was proposed to net his associates the modest profit of $19,000,000 in ten years, did McKee waver. When the news leaked out concerning a series of secret conferences at which the Tammany bosses, along with Walker and McKee, had sought to resolve the clashing ambitions of bus promoters and political backers, McKee announced that he would take no further part in secret meetings on the subject. At the same time he made haste to explain that his action implied no criticism of Mayor Walker. In the Board of Estimate he voted with Walker at every turn to hasten the Equitable deal, and McKee and Henry Bruckner, president of the borough of the Bronx, were Walker's sole aids during many months of the protracted siege.

During his first years as aldermanic president, McKee functioned as a sort of prime minister for Mayor Walker. It was McKee's practice then to send Walker an annual letter on the state of the city government. One of the achievements of the Walker administration listed by McKee in his letter of 1927 was his "settlement of the bus awards." And in the face of the Equitable fiasco McKee lent himself again in 1931 to an effort to jam through questionable bus awards in the borough of Queens, turning down a better but politically unsupported offer which would have netted the city an extra income of half a million a year. Exposure of the deal by the City Affairs Committee forced McKee to beat a hasty retreat, with no adequate explanation offered of his change of heart.

Walker could count on McKee's support in other important matters. In 1926 he voted in favor of leasing Piers 84 and 86 in the Hudson River to the United American lines for $570,000 a year, which he considered "a substantial and adequate return." Three years later the transaction was found to be shot through with corruption. Judge Bernard Vause, now in the Atlanta penitentiary, was found to have

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received $250,000 from the steamship lines with which to facilitate granting of the leases. McKee was a full if silent partner in the salary grab of 1929 which raised Mayor Walker's salary to $40,000 a year and his own to $25,000 a year.

Perhaps the best indices to Mayor McKee's social concepts are his views on education and housing. In his budget-slashing campaign, educational items have been his particular targets. "When children are in school after fourteen years of age something has happened to American ideals," he declared at a budget hearing. He fought for complete elimination of the provision by which unemployed men and women have been able to spend their idle time in continuation schools and in vocational study; he wanted school athletic centers closed; he disapproved of expenditures on summer schools and school gardens and for the teaching of international relations in the colleges and universities. He felt that classes now averaging thirty-nine pupils to a teacher might well be enlarged. Raising his hands in horror at the coddling of the school children, McKee wanted to know "where education is going to stop." "All this care is softening the children up. Let them go out at fourteen and earn their education as we did when I was young." His tactics led to hysterical attacks on the entire school system from representatives of the real-estate boards. With McKee's approval they demanded an end to the "racket" by which teachers on sick leave receive compensation.

Demands of the real-estate interests have led him into a completely anti-social position on housing. When the Reconstruction Finance Corporation announced its intention of lending $6,000,000 to a limited-dividend corporation for the construction of reasonably priced apartments in the Bronx, the real-estate operators of his home borough denounced the plan. McKee listened sympathetically and then attacked the R. F. C. as a meddler. The Bronx, he said, did not need any new apartments; it was a borough without a slum. He went so far as to propose a municipal ordinance which would bar tax exemption to the proposed venture.

There is little excuse for McKee's ignorance of housing conditions in his home borough; and there is no apparent explanation for his opposition to the project except his willingness to serve the real-estate owners who have thousands of empty high-priced apartments on their hands. The figures of the city's Tenement House Department for 1931 reveal that there are 31,332 condemned, old-law apartments in the Bronx and that more than 90 per cent of them are inhabited by families who cannot afford anything better. Clarence A. Stein, former chairman of the State commission on housing and regional planning, has described the great Bronx building boom of 1920 to 1930 as adding immensely to "potential slums." "In the Bronx," said Mr. Stein, "speculative builders continued to cover every inch of ground not devoted to streets or narrow courts with six-story monstrosities where most of the rooms looked out across a six-by-twelve-foot court on whitewashed walls decorated only with hideous fire escapes or on equally sunless streets. Poor ventilation, little or no sunlight, no sign of green, and dangerous streets." This, concluded Mr. Stein, is the housing of the next fifty to a hundred years in the "borough without a slum."

Enough has been related here to reveal the character of Mayor McKee's relations with the Democratic rings which dominate New York City, and also to indicate his shortcomings as a municipal leader devoted to broad social service. Two typical acts of McKee's since he succeeded to Mayor Walker's chair will complete the picture. One of the most audacious of his steps was his discharge of Commissioner of Markets Dwyer when the latter failed on short notice to present a plan for operating the Bronx Terminal Market at a profit to the city. It is difficult, however, to understand why McKee did not speak up earlier, since Judge Seabury has just shown that the market lost $2,889,570 of the city's money in the years 1929, 1930, and 1931.

Praise of McKee rose high when he delivered a ukase against the expensive limousines of Tammany leaders. He was informed in 1927 that these cars were costing the city $1,000,000 a year, but then he did not see fit to notice the complaint. As a matter of fact, in his first year as president of the Board of Aldermen, McKee spent more city money on automobiles than his annual salary, then $15,000. One of his first acts was to have the city buy him a limousine at a cost of $7,780 and provide a chauffeur at $2,500 a year. Of course the reigning prince of Tammany, James J. Walker, discarded four old cars which had been good enough for his predecessor and treated himself to four new ones at a total cost of $26,880. But McKee soon learned. By the end of 1926 two chauffeurs were assigned to his office; by 1929 there were three; in 1930 his office had at its disposal four Cadillacs and a Packard and the use of three chauffeurs costing $7,380 a year, with incidental expenses of $4,860.

McKee has a good chance to be elected mayor of New York City next year. In November, though his name was not on the ballot, he received the startling number of 232,501 votes. It is estimated that his final vote would have been four or five hundred thousand had it not been for the difficulties involved in writing in his name. An alliance with the hungry Republican boss, Samuel Koenig, now bereft of all his federal patronage and seeking any deal which will give him a few crumbs, would certainly give him most of the 442,901 votes which went to Mr. Pounds. Edward J. Flynn, Bronx Democratic boss, who is close to President-elect Roosevelt, will do all in his power to win Roosevelt's backing, though his efforts will no doubt meet the counterbalancing influence of James A. Farley, who always prefers a deal to an open fight. But his election would mean little in the way of reform or of meeting the social needs of the city. He might prune the more obviously dishonest sections of the budget. He might bring about the consolidation of county offices, which would save at the most some $500,000 a year. Appearing before Judge Seabury, he did favor proportional representation but his plan for reorganization was distinctly inferior to the proposals of Al Smith. The chief danger is that he would put through an economy program designed to curtail rather than extend the city's social services. A reform administration headed by Mayor McKee promises nothing to the masses of the city, who would find themselves once more trapped by a leadership which made no pretense of attacking constructively the problems of housing, transit, education, health, and recreation.

Only a program of municipal socialism backed by an organization ready to square the issues between reform and social reconstruction can solve these problems. Already the Socialist campaigns of Norman Thomas and Morris Hillquit, supplemented by the day-by-day fruitful work of the City Affairs Committee, have given us a base on which to build.

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The program for such a movement is indicated by the very shortcomings in the present reform program. The reformers' plans for efficiency and economy would certainly be the beginning of such a program—though it would eliminate the false economy which penalizes low-salaried municipal employees and saves money at the expense of education, health, and recreation facilities. Affirmatively, such a program would include a unified, municipally owned subway, elevated, and bus system whose management would be shared by workers, technicians, and representatives of the voters; the development of publicly owned utilities, such as electricity and gas, which would in time, by competition and acquisition, supplant the private utilities; establishment of a municipal milk-distributing agency run for service and not for profit; a public housing program which would be especially beneficial in meeting the unemployment problem; the shifting of the tax burden to improved real-estate values, whereby the city's principal source of taxation revenue would be derived from an assessment which would expropriate the rental value of land; proportional representation designed to end the unequal distribution of power which now gives Tammany a free hand; and the safeguarding of the ballot, which might be accomplished by drawing election inspectors from Civil Service lists rather than from district clubhouses and by improving the voting-machine so that it would automatically register the final vote and eliminate the practice of making false transcriptions of the vote from the machine to the official return blanks.

Behind the Cables

By E. D. H.

Rome, November 30

ITALIAN foreign policy, which has always been based on the sound and mellow policy of getting as much as possible for nothing, seems to have fallen on evil days. The Mussolini program of demanding everything, from African colonies to naval parity with France, meantime offering as quid pro quo nothing but the promise to be a good boy if satisfied, is not, I find in Rome, a very tactful subject for conversation. What happened was that Mussolini himself, discovering two years ago that fleets and armies were expensive, began to shout for conciliation, disarmament, peace. Our friends in Whitehall, the Quai d'Orsay, and the Wilhelmstrasse did not appreciate the ingenuity of this *volte-face,* and —for other reasons also—the Italians were cold-shouldered at the London Danube conference, later at Geneva, and most particularly at Lausanne.

ITALY ON THE SHELF

The Palazzo Chigi seems to be planning a little revenge. Its present program calls for a Moral Alliance with the United States. Italy, the big brother of America, is going to help defend us from the insidious and underhand attack of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and the other would-be defaulters on the debts which are due December 15. Italy is not going to join the others. Italy is not going to protest. Italy, a moral, upright, and only slightly bankrupt nation, is going to pay. This is an impressive gesture, especially when you consider that Great Britain has to pay $95,000,000, France $20,000,000—and Italy the net sum of $1,245,437.60.

Domestically, things are going smoothly. Anyone who talks of impending civil trouble is 'way off. The process of Fascism continues, as a wise old bird put it, to make Romans out of Italians. Mussolini is at the very height of his health, his career, and his power, and nothing is going to end his regime except his death or, conceivably, a war. You should have seen that tour of his through the north to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Fascismo. I find my liberal principles making me regret a little that it was so impressive, but impressive it certainly was. Within Italy, that is. It got an indifferent press outside, owing to the competition of the German and American elections. The King? Well, the King was packed off to Eritrea during the ceremonies, and Mussolini's chief speech was deliberately and conspicuously given in Turin, alleged hotbed of alleged royalist reaction. The fact is that the royal family has so deeply compromised itself by allegiance to the regime that if Mussolini ever goes, the dynasty is likely to go too, and quickly.

Italians do not talk much about politics, of course. Most of the conversation I have heard concerns (a) the very great annoyance of the Duce at the failure of the turbines of the Rex on its unhappy maiden voyage, and (b) amusement at the air armada of twenty seaplanes which General Balbo is going to lead next year to, of all places, Chicago. Many highly placed persons, they say, and I do not vouch for this, have a grudge against Balbo, although Balbo, with Faranacci, is by common consent the Fascist heir apparent; and Mussolini continually allows him to risk his neck on all manner of silly flights. If Balbo dies, there is going to be an informal public holiday. The Chicago trip is hazardous, and there may be a crack-up. Who knows?

My friends and spies tell me that a bit of a movement has been started to move the League from Geneva to County Cork. Eamon de Valera has been a stunning success as president of the Council. Besides, the recent massacre of eleven civilians by a Geneva machine-gun company turned the stomachs of some of those who were talking about disarmament a few yards away. In Ireland they at least add a romantic touch to assassination. For the Geneva murders there was not even the excuse of graceful performance. Not for many a moon has the League more enjoyed anything than the firm, unctuous, and elegant way in which De Valera squelched the Japanese. He overruled Matsuoka several times, and as I write, it appears that he will be successful in forcing Japan to accept consideration of the Lytton report by the Assembly, not the Council.

THE IRISH OF IT

Things are moving on schedule internationally, with some optimism and few sensations. No one should have been surprised at the Beggars' Union, that is, the solid front of the Powers (except, at the moment, Italy), asking postponement of their December debt payments. It makes one blink

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to read of naive queries in America as to whether this solid front actually exists. Of course it does. It was written, by implication anyway, into the Lausanne report. As for disarmament, the haggling is very wearying, with the fundamental situation little changed. Germany, wanting a bargain, left the disarmament conference. France, to bring her back, put forward the Herriot plan. The Herriot plan offers equal rights, the major German claim, but only if the plan in toto is accepted, and this the Germans cannot possibly do. See below. Thus for another month or more there must be laborious mutual whittling.

The World Economic Conference has succeeded, with great effort, in postponing itself until April or May. The excuse given is that the experts, themselves adjourned to mid-January, must prepare an agenda which the Powers should have ample time to study. MacDonald in London recently protested, calling the experts a menace and saying that the Lausanne conference would still be sitting if the experts alone had been left at work. MacDonald is not well, I hear; certainly he knew nothing of what was going on if he thought the conference could meet by Christmas. It was not only the experts who caused the delay; no one has the faintest desire to hold the conference until the new American Administration is in office and has given some indication of whether or not it will permit debts to be discussed. As to America's refusal to grant a breathing-spell on December 15, I imagine that M. Edouard Herriot will be its first European victim.

HERRIOT'S PLAN

Some people wrote that my piece of six weeks ago, saying that France would shortly seek to reduce German armaments below even their present level, was far-fetched; and a month ago, before its full details were known, I was, I am informed, rude and scurrilous in my description of the Herriot disarmament plan. Well, I ask you to read it. There is some good in it, and one major step forward—the recommendation that the League Council give decisions by majority and not unanimous vote. What else does it give us? This, the French at last go on record as consenting to actual revision of the Treaty of Versailles. For what end? To abolish what army Germany has, the Reichswehr!

Poison for Profit*

By F. J. SCHLINK and ARTHUR KALLET

OF all the rank flowers in the garden of rugged American individualism, few have a more vile and pervasive stench than the huge $350,000,000 patent-medicine blossom. At its best, the patent-medicine industry is guilty only of the economic fraud of selling necessary drugs under meaningless or fantastic names, with absurd claims of special merit, at from five to a thousand times their ordinary price. At its worst, the industry is guilty of murder—through selling medicines containing poisons and through persuading the poor and ignorant to rely upon worthless nostrums for the treatment of diseases as dangerous to the individual and to the race as cancer and tuberculosis and syphilis. Most vicious of all the murderous quacks who prey upon the diseased are those who "cure" cancer. Medical science is practically helpless against cancer in its later stages; but in the earlier stages of the disease a large percentage of cases can be cured. The alternative to early treatment by surgery or radium or X-rays at the hands of competent technologists is a slow, painful death. And it is to such a death that the cancer-cure quacks condemn far too many of the unfortunate dupes who, through ignorance or fear of surgery, become their victims.

What are the penalties for such murder? *No penalties whatever, even when the killing can be proved.* Under the federal Food and Drugs Act, the courts, if they function at all, occasionally impose a small fine if a dangerous nostrum is *mislabeled;* they can do nothing, even though the nostrum kills, if it has no technically false statements on its label.

For example, there was Kopp's Baby's Friend. Between January, 1906, and February, 1907, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported the deaths of nine infants, most of them only a few months old, from dosage with this "King of Baby Soothers." An analysis of the nostrum made by the American Medical Association in 1905 showed that it contained a dangerous opiate, morphine sulphate. A shipment of Kopp's Baby's Friend and other Kopp remedies was seized by government inspectors in 1915, a decade later. The government charged that Kopp's Baby's Friend was misbranded, and the company was fined *$25 and costs*—the costs in such a case may run from $15 to $25. After this farce the company was permitted not only to remain in the medicine business but to continue to sell the same deadly poison, provided that it made no false claims on the label—it could still claim anything it thought credible in its advertising—and declared the presence of the opiate, morphine sulphate.

There is a pleasant fiction constantly revived by apologists for advertising: they refer to the old "patent-medicine days," and imply that dangerous "cures" belong to the past; that the federal Food and Drugs Act came along like a strong, fresh wind and swept them all away. We forget that the act applies only to claims printed on labels or packages and is completely impotent to prevent the sale of injurious quack medicines or to prevent the making of viciously misleading claims in newspaper, magazine, radio, handbill, drug-store-almanac, or mail advertising. Even if labels were universally accurate, the advertising, by its volume, its frequency, its cleverly worded assurances and testimonials, and the good repute of the medium in which it appears, sells the nostrum, and a simple, modest label on the package, by its very reserve, seems to reinforce the position of high integrity so carefully assumed by the shrewder and more dangerous quacks.

How urgent the need is for a thorough overhauling of the whole badly designed and tottering structure for the protection of the public against unsafe medicines and drugs

* This article is taken from a book, "One Hundred Million Guinea Pigs" (earlier announced as "Poison for Profit"), to be published in January by the Vanguard Press.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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can be judged from the death this year of the wealthy E. M. Byers as a result of taking Radithor, a patent medicine containing radium, marketed by William J. A. Bailey, a man with a long record of dangerous quackery. Bailey, an ignorant and unscrupulous charlatan, was not required by any law or agency to prove that his nostrum could be taken by human beings without serious injury, despite the fact that it contained radium, a deadly poison when used indiscriminately; and despite the public knowledge of the recent horrible deaths of women workers who had swallowed small quantities of a radium salt used in painting luminous watch-dials.

Food and Drug Administration officials were apathetic in their reaction to the whole matter. If there had been no radium in Radithor, they said, they could have prosecuted Bailey for misbranding, but since it was correctly labeled, they could do nothing. That is, Bailey was safe from prosecution so long as the nostrum, though deadly, was correctly labeled. If his nostrum had been safe and mislabeled, he would have been in danger of a $25 fine or confiscation of a certain number of bottles of his product. The career of Radithor has now been ended, not by the Food and Drug officials in the interest of public welfare, but by the Federal Trade Commission in the interest of "fair trade." Radithor advertising made false and misleading claims, which was unfair to competitors and took their business away. But note that while Mr. Byers died in 1932, the Department of Agriculture as far back as October, 1929, had reported the presence on the market of a flood of radium preparations and devices sold for their marvelous curative powers. There were waters, belts, pads, salves, hair tonics, tissue creams, mouth washes, even chocolate bars. Many of these are still being sold. Most of them contain no radium in any form and so are probably harmless. But others, like Radithor, actually contain radium, which can cause cancer and other diseases, even when it does not enter the body. There is no knowing how many hundreds or even thousands of lives are being endangered at the present time by these radium-bearing preparations and devices, be they ever so properly labeled.

Hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of persons are still being unwittingly dosed with a hundred or a thousand other dangerous poisons; and there is no law, except feeble and ineffective State and municipal regulations, almost never enforced, by which the poisoners can be reached. For some curious reason, perhaps because opportunity is offered to safeguard private morals as well as health, the presence of alcohol, narcotics, and a few other drugs must be declared on proprietary medicine labels under the provisions of the federal Food and Drugs Act. But patent medicines may—and do—contain arsenic, strychnine, or any one of countless other poisons without any notice of their presence being given to purchasers. If so-called patent medicines were actually patented, their formulae would at least be available at the Patent Office to anyone paying the five-cent fee for the printed patent paper. With rare exceptions, however, they are not patented, and their contents are secrets which are wisely kept from purchasers, and which, in the United States, the makers are under obligation to reveal to no one, even to government officers. The approximate formulae of only a small percentage are ever discovered, as analyzed at very great expense by the American Medical Association or by government chemists in connection with fraudulent therapeutic claims.

A typical case reported by the Bureau of Investigation of the American Medical Association is that of Matthew Richartz and Eksip, his cure for diabetes. The fraudulent and dangerous character of this particular piece of quackery was described in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1922 and again in 1926. The business was carried on through the mails; yet it was not stopped by the Post Office Department or the Food and Drug Administration until February, 1931. Eksip consisted essentially of magnesium carbonate, ordinary talc and starch, a worthless mixture which would have been harmless had not Richartz advertised that Eksip made dieting unnecessary—that diabetics taking Eksip could eat anything. There can be little doubt that this dangerous advice sent many diabetics to an untimely death, for over $90,000 worth of the nostrum was sold in 1928. (How many so died, it is the business of no one in America to know or to care.)

Here is the history of Richartz and his Eksip as revealed by the investigations of the Post Office Department. Richartz, born in Germany, received only four or five years' schooling. From 1886 to 1895 he was a barber, first in Holland and later in England. Arriving in New York in 1895, he became business agent for a barbers' union. Eksip was created in 1921 from the formula of "Dr. Stein-Callenfels . . . noted European specialist who, after a life-long study, amazed other European specialists with his famous discovery." As a matter of fact, Dr. Stein-Callenfels never existed.

Like practically all quacks, Richartz used testimonials extensively. In 1929 he was using this testimonial of J. C. Meyers of Charleston, South Carolina: "I am a living advertisement for Eksip . . . for if it had not been for Eksip and God's blessing, I would have been in my grave today." But alas, in 1929 J. C. Meyers *was* in his grave. He had died five years before of diabetes, the disease which Eksip "cured." Richartz produced one living testimonial at the postal hearings, Lewis L. Smith, a diabetic who testified that such were the benefits of Eksip that he "didn't bother about diet any more." Three days after he testified, with the hearings still in progress, Smith died—likewise of diabetes. The Bureau of Investigation deplores the fact that "in order to prove the fraudulence of this business it was necessary for the government to do a vast amount of investigating [the transcript of the testimony in the hearings occupies 1,284 pages], consume a large amount of public time and money, call on medical and pharmacological experts, and in other ways treat this whole matter as though it were a controversial scientific question. All this is necessary under our legal conception that a man is assumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty." Still more deplorable, and at the root of the whole expensive and ridiculous proceedings of federal law enforcement, is the fact that a man with Richartz's background should ever have been permitted to engage in such a business, and that now, found guilty of dangerous fraud, he should be privileged to return to the sale of medicines simply by changing the name of his company and his nostrum—creating a new job for the post-office inspectors and the officers of the law.

Of the thousands of quacks who prey upon gullible sufferers from cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, venereal diseases, and other dangerous ailments, only those who are so foolish as to print absurd claims on the labels of their preparations

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instead of confining these claims to the advertising are in danger even of transient interference from the federal Food and Drug Administration. The government inspectors do sometimes seize a shipment of such a misbranded nostrum, and the Food and Drug Administration carefully and soberly considers whether the claims are justified "in the light of present scientific knowledge." With rare exceptions, the nostrum, be it sold as a cure for tuberculosis, pneumonia, anemia, or any one of a hundred other diseases, is exactly as potent as the mystic rites of little boys for curing a wart. Upon deciding that the claims are fraudulent, the government takes a legal step preliminary to confiscation of the seized shipment, but not against the quack. Since the quack or his representative rarely troubles to enter a defense, the court is free to order the destruction of the single shipment involved. Sometimes the quack gets his shipment back by agreeing to relabel or reprocess it; usually he changes the labeling of his nostrum to avoid the possibility of future seizures, contenting himself with some form of advertising as the vehicle for any claims he may wish to make. Sometimes he does not bother to change the labeling, for a dollar bottle of a nostrum may have cost him only a penny or two to prepare, and the loss resulting from confiscations of a tiny proportion of his product is too trivial to worry about.

When, long afterwards, sometimes after years, the courts sustain the action of the government in making a seizure or, in a very few cases, in assessing a small fine, a "Notice of Judgment" is printed by the Department of Agriculture. These published notices are the administration's sole method of protecting the public from further operations of the cheat or poisoner. Unfortunately, past, present, and potential victims do not see the notices.

It costs money to be sick, to go to doctors, specialists, and hospitals; it costs more money than most people have or can spare. A poor woman worrying herself to death, fearing that the small lump she has discovered on her breast is cancer, knows that if she goes to the doctor it will mean visits to high-priced, mysterious, and uncommunicative specialists, costing a year's income and the end not only of a life's savings but also of a life's hopes for children whose health and education depend on those savings. How easy it is at such a time for her to believe the advertisement (is she not taught on Bruce Barton's sacred word that advertising is essentially honest and in the public interest?) of a positive cancer cure —only seventy-five cents a bottle, and it can be used at home, one teaspoonful morning and evening in a half-glass of water. Or it may be tuberculosis, or diabetes, or perhaps a venereal disease of which the victim is ashamed and which he would like to cure secretly with that stuff he read about in the advertisement, or his druggist told him of. To buy the magic bottle is so easy, and, at first, so cheap! And it is bought. The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care found that Americans spend $350,000,000 annually on patent medicines —enough for three or four bottles of some deadly, or dangerous because useless or inert, mess for every man, woman, and child in the United States.

The Lame Ducks Meet

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, December 10

BELIEVE it or not, Hoover already is running for reelection in 1936. Upon excellent authority I am informed that he has virtually recovered from the shock of defeat, considers himself a very great man who has had a very bad run of luck, and confidently expects to beat back after Roosevelt has been destroyed by the depression. No doubt this will seem as ridiculous to you as it seems to me, but poor Herbert Hoover never was celebrated for his sense of the ridiculous. Everyone knows that he is deader than Tutankhamen. The boys who do the spade work in the Republican organization never did like him, and trusted him still less. Those who still have jobs are glad he is gone, and those who lost them in consequence of the recent debacle blame and hate him with a bitterness which could only be mitigated by his return to England. All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put him together again, yet no sooner had he returned from Palo Alto than he began laying plans for a comeback. Cabinet members and Congressional leaders were instructed that the "obvious strategy" was to block the Democratic legislative program (if any) in the present session, and thus force Roosevelt to call a special session soon after March 4. Since his own troubles started with one, Mr. Hoover naturally is convinced that all special sessions are fatal—a conclusion, incidentally, with which many Democratic leaders agree. Accordingly, I am told, he is prepared to veto a beer bill or a farm-relief bill or both, in the event they pass Congress. The same "strategy" unquestionably was a factor in the failure of the prohibition-repeal resolution. The plain truth is that Democratic leaders were double-crossed. Garner and Rainey had promised to deliver a maximum of 165 votes for the resolution. Republican leaders had promised to deliver at least 110. Actually, the Democratic vote for the resolution was 168 and the Republican vote was 103 (Farmer-Laborite Kvale also voting for it). It failed by a margin of 6 votes. The treachery is patent enough. Of the 100 Republicans who voted against the measure, 70 are lame ducks, many of whom hope for appointments of some character before Hoover goes out of office. If the votes of these 70 discredited and defeated Representatives had been cast by the men who will succeed them in the next Congress, the resolution would have been adopted with more than 30 votes to spare! And let us not forget that it was the Republican organization in the House which for ten years delayed submission of the lame-duck amendment to the Constitution.

* * * * *

THE wisdom of that amendment and the crime of those who delayed its adoption have never been more forcibly demonstrated than by the content of the President's message to Congress. It is the message of a leader whose leadership has been overwhelmingly repudiated. On unemployment relief, the most pressing problem before the country, it pre-

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sents not a single idea. On prohibition, the most popular issue in the country, it is utterly silent. If the times were not so tragic, one could be humorous about this pathetic document. In it we find the greatest commission man who ever occupied the White House pleading for the consolidation and abolition of commissions. The President who recently boasted about the number of jobs he had created through public works calls for drastic reduction in the federal building program. The same Hoover who once admonished employers to maintain wage scales as a means of ending the depression now recommends another slash in the miserable pay checks of federal employees. After all his talk about economy in the Veterans' Bureau he proposes to end only one-fourth of the expenditures now made on account of disabilities not connected with military service. The great apostle of peace would make but negligible cuts in the enormous budgets of our army and navy. Still clinging blindly to the notion that our discredited bankers and their discredited system hold the key to prosperity, he recommends changes in the banking laws—conveniently forgetting that virtually all his recommendations were proposed by Carter Glass many months ago. The message, in short, is a political document in which the author seeks to offend none, please as many as possible, and avoid controversy. Even the Republican lame ducks blushed and were silent when it was read.

* * * * *

THERE is every reason to believe at this writing that Hoover's "strategy" will succeed to the extent of compelling a special session next year, and without extolling the motives which prompt him one still may welcome the result. The cowardice of the Democratic leaders who have sought to avoid such a session is not a cheering omen, but I have no information that Governor Roosevelt shares their fears. On the contrary, there is credible evidence that he will face the event with confidence. As I have said in this place before, it is plain that not one-tenth of the Democratic campaign pledges can possibly be redeemed during the session which ends March 4. The idea of eliminating a billion-dollar deficit, passing a farm bill, relieving unemployment, revising the tariff, and reforming the banking system in the space of three months is so preposterous as to be fantastic in the eyes of anyone who knows anything about Congress. It has been my experience that Congress usually requires at least three times as long to pass any given piece of legislation as is estimated by the gloomiest observer. The Senate could easily devote a year to almost any of the foregoing measures. And that is not a criticism—any one of them is entitled to a year's consideration. It is unfortunate that sensible and informed people have to contend with the silly business-man myth that "Congress is bad for business," and the specious political idea that "special sessions are poison." A Rotarian or an alderman should be able to see by now that what little has been done to save the country has been done by Congress, and that if anything more is done Congress must do it. A special session now appears to be inevitable.

* * * * *

WASHINGTON narrowly escaped being the scene of a bloody massacre this week. This calamity did not occur for the following reasons: (1) Federal authorities are still scared over the popular reaction which followed the eviction of war veterans and their families last July; and (2) the American Communist is not a natural fighting man. The foolish and futile "hunger march" conducted by the Communists might easily have resulted in a major tragedy. The local cops were spoiling for trouble. They forced three thousand men and women to camp three days and three nights on a broad, wind-swept boulevard on the outskirts of the city, flanked on one side by railroad yards and on the other by a wooded bluff, without drinking water or toilet facilities. More than twenty of them are now in local hospitals suffering from influenza and pneumonia. The harness bulls made every conceivable attempt to provoke a clash. And without a doubt, if the word had come down from above, they would have managed it. The word never came—and Communists have learned not to resent insult. In the result I am able to perceive two profound ironies. The first is that federal authorities avoided serious bloodshed mainly by adopting the methods for which they denounced former Chief of Police Glassford last summer; the second is that the government employed less force against the hated Communists than it employed against the khaki-clad heroes who had fought for their country. I had a great deal of sympathy for the veterans and very little for the Communists. For expressing such a sentiment I expect to be denounced by some of my friends as a Ku Kluxer—just as I have been denounced for expressing the modest belief that the governments of Europe would not be wholly ruined by devoting 2 or 3 per cent of their respective revenues to the payment of what they owe the American taxpayer. Sad to say, I probably shall remain unimpressed by denunciation on either score.

The Catch

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

The fishermen's great feet tread blind,
Independent of a mind,
Their hands alone are live and bright
Dipped in the astounding white
Of smelts and herring choked with air
Under a lantern's smoky flare.
The men's slow backs loom high and broad,
Their thighs spread like the thighs of God
Above the fish with sides like frost
And small eyes staring wide and lost.

It is a strange world of tipped planes,
Fish scales smear men's hands like stains
Of stars. Above, the real stars slide.
Beyond the men, the fecund tide
Swells her bosom to her lover,
The high moon, leaning cold above her;
She prepares another brood
Of silver children for the food
Of her ancient children risen
To the air. Up in the prison
Of their houses fishermen's wives
Wait to mingle their warm lives
With strange beings cold as death,
With night and starlight in their breath,
Who have had their fingers curled
Around old secrets of the world.

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A Foreigner Looks at the A. F. of L.

By FRITZ RAGER

IT is well known in Europe that the American labor movement is quite different from that in all the old countries. But if one wishes a real picture of the exact difference between the two one must see and hear for oneself an annual meeting of the American Federation of Labor, as I have just done in Cincinnati. Then one no longer wonders why it is that the cooperation of American and European trade unions, the most obvious need in the labor world, will probably not come to pass for a long time. If it only could be achieved, the world would be the richer for the realization of a great hope—even if there should be only a loose cooperation between the 13,000,000 workers represented in the Amsterdam Internationale and the 2,500,000 members of the American Federation of Labor.

As a matter of fact, the workers of both continents were, at least formally, members of the same labor international until shortly before the end of the World War. But today it seems incredible that the plan for the creation of the International Labor Office in Geneva sprang in considerable degree from the initiative of Samuel Gompers, and that this leader of America's organized workers was the chairman of that committee of the Peace Conference which in Paris, in 1919, wrote the text of Article XIII of the Treaty of Versailles. When one sees American labor in action today and marks its present-day mentality, it seems impossible that Washington was the scene of the first International Labor Conference at which was voted the historic decision by the workers of the several nations to demand the establishment of the eight-hour day. In reality there is to be found today no trace of this large-minded conception of world problems in the groups which then grasped world leadership. I have just completed a lecture tour of several months throughout the United States and I can testify that the existence and achievements of the Geneva Labor Office, representing as it does the fifty-five leading industrial states of the world with the exception of the United States and Russia, are practically unknown in America.

The chief difference between the European and American labor movements is that the American Federation of Labor consciously concerns itself only with the upper classes of the labor movement. Only 2,500,000 of the 30,000,000 American workers belong to the federation; in the best years after the war it never had more than 4,000,000 members. A delegate to the Cincinnati convention said in a tone of justified pessimism: "We represent only 5 per cent of American workers." The corresponding proportion in the European countries runs between 20 and 60 per cent—more in the best years. None the less, the leaders of the federation are convinced that they, and not the workers in other countries, are following the right policy. The Cincinnati convention threw some interesting sidelights on the question of the federation's attitude toward expansion. There was a long debate over the admission of certain women's unions, which was finally refused on purely technical grounds; and there was a long explanation of the equality of the Negro "in principle," which the sole Negro delegate present accepted with an air of complete patience with this opportunism.

The reason for the conservative attitude of the federation is not to be found in the official statements but is to be read between the lines. It is fear of the entrance of new and possibly radical elements. To me it is clear that the continuance of this policy by the federation will make it impossible to build up a really comprehensive and powerful labor organization in the greatest of industrial nations. There are two essential reasons operating against any such growth under existing American policies, and they happen to be the very ones which for decades have inspired European laborers to further progress. In the first place, 28,000,000 unorganized workers, in good as in bad times, threaten the standard of living of those who are organized. Further, the American unions are still built about the special skill and qualifications of their members, although in the age of the moving belt the importance of a skilled trade grows steadily less.

But the greatest difference between labor in Europe and the United States is to be found not in their theories of internal organization, but in their respective attitudes toward the state. I suppose American labor leaders will be astonished at my daring to say that their attitude toward the state and its duties toward organized labor is identical with the philosophy of the syndicalist and anarchist members of the European unions. These are the only others in the world who are opposed on principle to the state's entering into close relations with the unions. During the debate in Cincinnati over a proposed amendment to the federal Constitution for the establishment of the five-day week, an old and much-respected union president said—I give his words—"I cannot see any reason why we should follow some of the mad ideas of Europe!" The proposal was voted down, but the difficulty of altering the Constitution, which was the excuse given, did not seem to me wholly convincing. None the less, President Green and the convention spoke out energetically for the five-day week, and for this Mr. Green was severely criticized in the press. But the unions wish this matter to be settled by the industrialists and not through law-making, although technically—and in this hour of scarcity of work, politically—this would seem to be an especially fitting time to obtain the five-day week by law. Moreover, the International Labor Office in Geneva will meet next month to plan for the much more difficult international acceptance of the five-day week, which again makes the present a fit time for American action.

Similarly, the foreign observer at Cincinnati could not fail to be struck by the attitude of the convention toward the shorter work day. Again, the discussion dealt chiefly with the economic results of shorter hours where the experiment has been tried, and with the effort to achieve this reform through union action. To me it appears as if it were asking too much of collective bargaining to stake everything upon the outcome of negotiations between employers and employees and to avoid the issue of obtaining legislative action to accomplish the desired purpose.

None the less, this Cincinnati convention deserves to be

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called a historic gathering because after much internal dissension it committed itself to a system of state unemployment insurance—a break with the policy I have already described. Yet there seems to the foreign observer a certain irony in the fact that the American labor movement has committed itself to an exclusively state-administered system of unemployment insurance such as exists only in England, whereas in all the other fifteen nations in which this reform has been introduced the labor unions have either had the administration of unemployment insurance entirely in their hands or have taken an extensive and successful share of the management thereof. The British fraternal delegate, Dukes, could have told the convention how the British government, with the aid of the so-called "means test," suddenly deprived 200,000 English unemployed workers of the dole by one cruel stroke of the pen.

The writer of these lines had the privilege of telling the convention briefly of the advantages that have come from the joint administration of unemployment insurance in Austria by the government and the labor unions. As a result of this cooperation, contrary to the fears expressed among American labor leaders as to the working of such joint control, it has been possible to maintain the wage standards and, in general, collective wage agreements, despite the crisis. It has also been possible to prevent the breaking down of wage scales by the unemployed, to maintain the purchasing power of the unemployed even at the present minimum, and, last but not least, to maintain the influence and the high reputation of the unions by the systematic and unceasing efforts of their representatives in all administrative positions, and by the successful exercise of their parliamentary influence upon the inevitable changes of the laws in the course of the years. Finally, it really appears as if the decision of the Cincinnati convention for a state system of unemployment insurance might be a turning-point in its policy. That would be an event much to be desired by all the workers of the world.

The Federation Faces the Facts

By J. B. S. HARDMAN

TWO events were responsible for the unusual publicity given to the convention of the American Federation of Labor in Cincinnati. They were (1) William Green's threat, at the end of his speech on the thirty-hour, five-day working week, that "we must be given [this reform] in response to reason, or we will secure it through force of some kind"; and (2) the convention's demand for compulsory unemployment insurance.

If the rather unfortunate and probably unplanned reference to "force" is duly disregarded, the declaration in favor of the thirty-hour work week is, for the present at least, only a gesture: a trade-union movement which at most comprises less than one-tenth of the country's wage-earning population, and is dominated by a conservative and staid bureaucracy, is not likely to carry the program into effect, unless it undergoes more than a rhetorical change of heart. More significant is the passing of the proposal for legislation establishing unemployment insurance. This represents, in principle at least, a decided break with a most important phase of the federation's past: the opposition of the A. F. of L. to compulsory insurance has been long, loud, and persistent.

The sessions of the convention in which the issue was discussed presented human drama of great interest. There a grand old idea was given burial, the idea of voluntarism, of objection to state intervention into the economic relations of employees and employers—one of the leading principles of the late Samuel Gompers. It was fitting that President Green, inheritor of Mr. Gompers's "matchless leadership," should take the lead in the rites and that tears should roll out of the old eyes of the last of the Mohicans, the ancient but ever picturesque Andrew Furuseth, president of the Seamen's Union. "I think you are making a mistake, men," said Mr. Furuseth with emotion and conviction. "I can't stop you, but the road you are traveling is the road that leads to the destruction of humanity and the destruction of the nation and of all other nations that can find no other way than to make out of a man a pleading beggar." John P. Frey, secretary of the Metal Trades Department of the A. F. of L., trade-union leader of age and standing and scholarly inclinations, attempted to bring the membership back to "first principles," but it was of no avail. President Howard of the International Typographical Union, whose locals have borne the major burden of the more than $9,000,000 in unemployment benefits paid out to members by federation unions, marshaled the weight of his logic and the prestige of his organization against compulsory unemployment insurance. It was useless.

What, then, happened in the convention? Have the tried and true men of the old faith gone over to a new persuasion? That is not quite the case. In fact, very largely the same delegates voted one year ago, in the Vancouver convention, against the measure, branding it as one that would be detrimental to the labor movement. The obvious truth is that to a good many men in the central body of organized labor it was a case of surrendering to the inevitable rather than a carefully weighed move to take control in a changed situation. President Green had served notice of this intention at an earlier date when he stated:

> New problems will come before the Cincinnati convention which must be met in the light of changed and changing conditions. *We must not be so wedded to precedents that we fail to see new aspects of human justice.* We need to turn unreservedly to organization of workers in the unorganized industries and to the establishment of standards assuring social justice in our democracy.

A large number of delegates in the convention found themselves drifting into a new set-up for which they did not plan but which they did not know how to prevent. Their organizations are in bad shape. Skilled labor, their constituency, is a constantly diminishing body. The workers in the organizations are heavily unemployed or under-employed. Dues are coming in at a dangerously slow rate. The active men in the unions press for "something to be done." But what can be done? Organize the unorganized? The

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heroic, much-talked-of decisions of several recent conventions to organize the South, the automobile industry, the textile workers, have failed to materialize. As a result, when the proposal was made for a thirty-hour week—a gesture more to the liking of the old-fashioned trade unionists—it was lustily cheered. The publicity about that decision was sure to keep the union folks back home appeased for a while. But a showdown would soon be demanded, and what assurance was there that a good fight could even be staged, let alone won? And who wants a fight? So unemployment insurance was voted in.

What is this voluntarism that made Gompers famous, this faith of the trade-union fathers which the federation has now formally abandoned? Why did it hold sway for so long and what part did it play in the fortunes of the movement? An answer to these questions is the more pertinent since the federation's new policy is not a stray accident in trade-union history. It is a part of the unfolding American scene.

Samuel Gompers, in his long life of leadership, never tired of expounding his idea of voluntarism. In fact, the older he grew and the more frequently life itself punctured holes in that principle and the more often Mr. Gompers himself was compelled to violate the commands of the doctrine in his workaday experience, the more fondly loyal to it he proclaimed himself to be. To him voluntarism stood, in the first place, for the free development of trade unionism, unrestrained by any accepted program or philosophy. What laissez faire or individualism was to the philosophers and ideologists of the rising merchant class in the first half of the nineteenth century, voluntarism was to the skilled American trade unionist in the last two decades of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth century. Even as the bourgeois philosophy of laissez faire was the weapon of the middle class against the "encroaching control" of advancing state capitalism, voluntarism was to Gompers the antidote to the Socialist attempt to secure a foothold in the trade unions. The principle of voluntarism soon became as important to professional trade-union leadership with a vested interest in the business as "rugged individualism" was to the capitalist for whom Herbert Clark Hoover in a later day was special advocate and loyal executive. That voluntarism was buried at about the same time that rugged individualism went the way of all bankrupts is not an uninteresting coincidence.

In the initial fight of the emerging A. F. of L., in the middle eighties, against the Knights of Labor, the battle cry of voluntarism served to rally the national trade unions. Trade autonomy, jurisdictional delineation, wage consciousness versus class consciousness, and craft-exclusiveness versus workers' solidarity were the most potent arguments to national union officers in favor of the A. F. of L. and against the K. of L. Later, in the contests for leadership between the Socialist and pure and simple trade-union leaders, voluntarism also supplied the intellectual defense against a social outlook, a political line-up, and an ethical obligation implied in the broad idea of labor leadership which consisted of more than merely collecting dues, sitting tight, and building a machine to assure permanence in office. This "individualization" of the inherently social or collective nature of the labor movement had a powerful attraction for "the man in overalls" in those rugged nineties. The ascending trade-union bureaucracy, overwhelmingly of Irish descent and intimately linked with the rising political machines in the city governments, could have nothing better than voluntarism as a convenient cloak for covering political ideals. A steady and secure office in a union and a well-feathered berth in the Tammany Hall of one party or another—the two grew logically out of voluntarism.

But capital was becoming stronger and stronger. Politics at last became a detail of the economic supremacy of money, privately owned or manipulated. The Supreme Court made of the Fourteenth Amendment a due-process instrument for the defense of big property interests against human rights; and the injunction, the yellow-dog contract, and the legal ban on the boycott were invented as weapons for the suppression of labor where it could not be tamed. A fight to the finish was on the program of business. Mass-organization, political unity, removal of jurisdictional divisions were the crying need of a movement caught between the impact of capitalist consolidation and technological revolution. To accomplish those ends, however, meant going out of well-appointed offices into the field, jeopardizing accumulated resources, sometimes taking a chance with life itself—and the "constituted leadership" of labor was advanced in age and heavy around the waistline. Voluntarism won the day. There must be no tying-up with a labor political party; social legislation is a snare and a delusion; only what labor can win by its own efforts, through free union action, is safe and worth having.

The situation had reached a critical stage even before the war set in. But the enormous demand for labor and uninterrupted mass production that came with the war brought temporary relief. The trade-union hierarchy, much in the dumps, suddenly found itself sitting around the tables of governmental auxiliary bodies and councils and rubbing elbows with the dollar-a-year patriots whose companies worked on a cost-plus basis. Even the deflation of labor which came with a vengeance after the war was compensated for by the prosperity wave of 1923 to 1928. These years were most destructive to labor morale. Union officers abrogated their leadership in favor of employers' personnel managers. Labor-organizing efforts ceased entirely. Labor leaders abandoned the front gates of factories to wait upon industrial-relations counselors and corporate vice-presidents. Company unionism was fought perfunctorily. Labor banking was initiated, there was a temporary half-hearted turn to semi-independent politics in the La Follette campaign, and then there was nothing more until the depression. Gompers was gone. His voluntarist logic was even more thoroughly dead. Yet the leadership continued in the old rut. With but few exceptions the trade-union movement failed to wake up to the thunder of the 1929 crash. In the 1930 convention Mr. Hoover was still able to boast of the dumb acquiescence of labor in the misery of the depression and his Secretary of War complimented the Fiftieth Jubilee Convention of the A. F. of L. on being the most nationalistic labor organization in the world. The eight million unemployed in the country at the time of the 1931 convention did not disturb the immutability of the A. F. of L. trade-union order. What has happened in 1932 has already been told.

The future will show whether the commitments of the Cincinnati meeting have any meaning. The vote for legislative enactment of unemployment insurance shows that there is no longer confidence in the old notions and subterfuges. But what is ahead cannot be measured by resolutions even if unanimously carried. Action alone will tell.

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Dissenting Opinion

Capital Levies

SIXTY years ago Joseph H. Choate argued against the income-tax law. He said it was communism. His red bogy won the day. Time has proved that Mr. Choate was unduly nervous, and few would now renounce the principle of the income levy. Up to now there has been a quasi-religious distinction between income and capital, but the mystic halo that has surrounded capital is evaporating as so many of the equities in the land are disappearing.

We are ready for the next step, which was enunciated during the recent campaign by the Socialist Party when it came out for the graded capital levy. Norman Thomas set forth in detail the proposed sliding scale from a $250 tax on $30,000 to a $30,000,000 tax on $50,000,000 of capital. Methods of collection and payments in instalments raise complications no less serious than the computation and collection of the income tax.

A graded capital levy has several objectives. It would tend to rub down the disparities that separate the 12,000,000 unemployed from that upper fringe which owns the greater part of the national wealth. It might also help toward balancing the budget, that ideal which so many—who borrowed on an unbalanced budget to fight a distant war—now worship. But most important, it may be the only scientific method of pulling from the backs of commodities the burden of interest charges. Private and public service charges for interest and amortization are about $20,000,000,000 a year. This is more than one-half of the total national income for 1932.

In everyday terms it might be said that we are now paying more in total rewards for past frugality than for the present labor and efforts of all those who produce.

The line of interest charges over several decades climbs at an angle somewhat like this— /

The consumption of commodities declines like this— \

The combination looks like this— /\

Unless by some human scheme we can press these lines together, we are threatened with starvation.

Of course we don't have to do anything. We can let things drift. But when things drift, vitality flows out in the same stream, and the drift would probably be toward inflation and the haphazard wiping out of much of the personal and national indebtedness. That kind of gambling legerdemain may be necessary, but it will carry as a sure corollary a new crop of *Luftmenschen*.

Again, we could really use the income tax. This might help some, but hardly enough for the simple reason that the past three years of unproductivity have so cut down the national income that the only effective slice would have to be the entire income. I should like to see a real income levy attempted. It might be comforting to find my secretary paying as little income tax as most of my millionaire clients. Poor girl, she has no losses to wipe out her weekly salary, whereas my clients have losses to spare.

At present we have many capital levies. Every time a building is foreclosed, the holder of a bond who receives less than the face value thereof has paid a capital levy of the difference. Every receivership is an unplanned capital levy. The Insull capital levy is typical of many and is accepted without much grumbling. By all these haphazard means the interest burden is decreased and a greater proportion of the wealth of the nation is available for consumption. But the main objection to a planned, graded capital levy arises from the fact that it *is* planned. The American people seem to prefer the present devastating and undirected abrasion of capital to a controlled and planned system for increasing the consumption power of the nation.

For my part I like the idea of a planned, graded capital levy because I think it is the easiest and most comfortable way of brushing away the daily memory of hungry men on my doorstep.

MORRIS L. ERNST

In the Driftway

SCULPTURE with Dynamite. Murals by the Mile. These two headlines picked at random from one issue of an art magazine serve to remind the Drifter that America is still doing things in a big way, with the aid of Gutzon Borglum and those artists for whom a vacant wall space a thousand feet square holds no terrors. José Clemente Orozco is covering 3,000 feet of wall space at Dartmouth College with an Epic of Civilization on the American Continent; the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company "has commissioned a half-mile of murals" for the dining-rooms of its new building in New York City; and Radio City, as everybody knows, has been a muralists' paradise.

* * * * *

UPON these mural activities the Drifter can look with great interest and no misgivings. The sturdiest building collapses in time and the deepest colors fade. The scenes from "Huckleberry Finn" and "Rip Van Winkle" with which D. Putnam Brinley and Edward Trumbull propose to decorate certain walls in the Metropolitan Life's new building sound delightful, and the Drifter has long thought that children should be allowed to cover the wall spaces of their schoolrooms with their own conceptions of the epic of America, past, present, and future, provided of course that the results could be easily removed.

* * * * *

THE colossal activities of Gutzon Borglum, on the other hand, fill the Drifter with apprehension, though he admits to a certain morbid interest in his methods, which are becoming both speedier and more violent. Having found that old methods of making faces on mountain sides were "childish and inadequate," Mr. Borglum now uses explosives, much to the delight of the manufacturers of dynamite, for whom he has recently told the story in *Du Pont's Magazine*.

> We have developed the drilling and blasting away of stone on Mount Rushmore to such a nicety [writes Mr. Borglum] that I can shape out a nose to within an inch or two of the finished surface, even down over the point of the nostrils, shape out the lips, grade the contours of

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the cheek and brow and all round surfaces. We can shape out even the eyebrow as a whole, but the defining of the eyelids and pupils is done with a drill and the air tool, operated by hand.

The article goes on to relate that last year Mr. Borglum and his company, in carving the heads of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt on the face of Mount Rushmore, North Dakota, removed more than 12,000 cubic yards of granite.

* * * * *

GREAT men were formerly allowed to leave unobtrusive footsteps in the sands of time. And the Drifter, for one, prefers footsteps in sand to faces on mountain sides. He considers the explosive school of sculpture a menace to our scenery, our civilization, and our sense of proportion. Mr. Borglum is growing ever bolder and more adept. It is not likely that he and his followers will be deterred by the fact that mountains are much more numerous than great men, and there is no reason to doubt that in time our financial wizards, seeking a new way of perpetuating their memory, will buy up any remaining available mountains and sit for a sculptor carrying a stick of dynamite in one hand and a match in the other. It is this prospect which fills the Drifter with despair. To come face to face with Washington or Lincoln along some remote mountain range would be at least bearable. But he cannot face the prospect of having to pitch his camp under the nose of Henry Ford.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Colombia's Case

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: During the past few weeks Peruvian diplomats have made every effort to conceal behind an avalanche of legalistic sophistry the real nature of the Leticia dispute with Colombia. They are striving to exhibit Peru, the clear aggressor in the latest conflict of the South American hinterland, as a peace-loving country that is seeking arbitration. But an examination of the facts leading up to the present situation will show that arbitration is impossible, and that Colombia is justified in trying to restore order within her own house in any manner she pleases.

The American reader is already informed that on September 1 a group of Peruvians from the province of Loreto in northern Peru attacked the undefended Colombian town of Leticia on the Amazon River, deposed and arrested the Colombian authorities, stole the moneys held in the treasury, and compelled Colombian families to seek refuge across the Brazilian border. This movement was engineered by one Oscar Ordóñez, who last July tried to blackmail the Colombian government, offering to sell for an exorbitant price the "La Victoria" farm, and threatening to start an international war unless the Colombian government paid the price asked. This letter, addressed to the Colombian minister in Lima, was published recently in Colombia and in Chile but suppressed in Peru.

Before the real nature of the movement was made clear, however, the Peruvian government promptly declined responsibility for this high-handed act, which it blamed on the "Communists." Thereupon Colombia proceeded to put down the uprising. But to the surprise of everybody, the Peruvian government tried to balk every effort of Colombia to do so, alleging that an international conflict existed, that the "uncontrollable aspirations" of the Loreto patriots must be taken into account, and that the conflict should be submitted to arbitration. The reason for this change was simply that the Lima government saw an opportunity to strengthen the shaky fealty of the province of Loreto, which is an important center of the opposition party, or the A. P. R. A. (American Popular Revolutionary Association), by giving them a piece of Colombian territory.

But this violation of the existing boundary treaty, of the Covenant of the League of Nations of which Peru is a member, of the Kellogg-Briand Pact which Peru signed, of the Hoover doctrine which refuses recognition of territorial gains made by force, and, in fact, of every known precept of international law was so clear that the Peruvian diplomats have had a hard time trying to convince the world of their own good faith. The position of Colombia, on the other hand, is clear and unequivocal. It is merely asserting its unquestionable right to expel from Leticia a bunch of lawless buccaneers. True enough, Colombia and Peru have had a century-old boundary dispute; but after long diplomatic negotiations both countries on March 24, 1922, gave proof that they had come of age and were determined not to indulge in further childish quarrels over a strip of jungle land. On that date the Lozano-Salomón treaty was signed at Lima to put an end to this vexing litigation. By this treaty Colombia ceded to Peru all its land south of the Putumayo except the small corridor on which Leticia is located. The high contracting parties declared in the treaty that "all and every one of the differences which had arisen hitherto because of the boundaries between Colombia and Peru are definitely and irrevocably ended, and that none can arise in the future to alter in any way the boundary line fixed by the present treaty."

The good offices of the United States were instrumental in negotiating this pact, and the Act of Washington of March 4, 1925, through which the treaty was consolidated, bears the signature of Charles Evans Hughes, then Secretary of State. Once the treaty was approved and ratified by the congresses of Colombia and Peru and filed with the League of Nations, Colombia proceeded to organize its territory on the Amazon under the name of Intendencia del Amazonas, built schools and administration buildings in Leticia, appointed civil authorities, and began to rule the region in an enlightened manner. It sent no troops there, because it relied on the good faith of its neighbors and the sanctity of treaties. This was not altogether unwarranted, as all its boundaries with Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and Panama had been settled peacefully by treaties which have always been respected. Why should Peru be an exception? The Ordóñez plot and the dictatorship of General Sánchez Cerro which took advantage of it were wholly unforeseen.

The Lima Foreign Office now wants to revise the treaty under the pressure of vioence, claiming that it is not satisfactory because it was negotiated by an unpopular regime, that of the late Augusto B. Leguía. This claim ignores the fact that the treaty was freely discussed in the Peruvian press and in the Peruvian congress for five long years before it was ratified. Moreover, what guaranty would there be that a possible agreement made now with Peru would be respected later if we should admit the doctrine of the discontinuity of government, which would free every successive administration from the obligations contracted by a previous one? Such a doctrine would be tantamount to nullification of all boundary treaties, and would set too dangerous a precedent to deserve serious consideration.

If war comes, the Peruvian military dictatorship will be exclusively responsible. Colombia is not going to attack Peru. But it will exercise its legitimate right to restore normality in Leticia under Colombian authority.

New York, November 21 JORGE CARDENAS

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A Denial from Mr. Kohler

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: In your issue of October 12 there appeared an article which refers to the primary election in Wisconsin of last September 20. The article quotes me as having said in 1930 that "I lost because Herbert Hoover was too heavy a load for any man to carry." Neither I nor, to my knowledge, anybody associated with me or my campaign at any time ever said or implied that President Hoover had anything whatever to do with my defeat in the 1930 primary. I may add that I supported President Hoover's candidacy for reelection with every means at my command.

Kohler, Wis., November 10 Walter J. Kohler

Bonus and Hunger Marchers

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I have received a letter from the National Committee Against Prepayment of the Bonus, and find Oswald Garrison Villard's name listed on the active committee, together with such notorious reactionaries as Bruce Barton, John W. Davis, Jules S. Bache, W. P. Belknap, August Belmont, Ivy Lee, and others. The arguments of this committee are sufficiently characterized by its chief slogan: "Patriots Fight for Principle—Not for Pay" and (considering the committee's composition) the hypocritical query: "Why should this selected group . . . be singled out for a special dole?"

The central significance of the veterans' struggle for their back pay is that it is also an entering wedge in the fight for unemployment insurance; a splendid opportunity to weld together ever larger sections of the hitherto divided workers and farmers. The bonus marchers were a body of resolute men, unemployed, destitute, with starving wives and children. Here was a force potential for good or evil. When it got into the hands of leadership imposed by General Glassford, it soon became clear that one very real possibility was that the bonus army would be turned to use *against* the working class; in the words of Commander Waters, "to fight unrest and anarchy." The liberals and Socialists, starting with a flat opposition to the bonus, left the veterans in the hands of the fascists.

The Communists, on the other hand, started from the realistic point of view of Marxism, which sees any movement as *in movement,* as a process. They knew that men driven by the need for food and shelter could soon be brought to see that unemployment insurance was more important than the bonus, that the bonus would soon be spent, and then what? But first one had to make common cause with the veterans in their bonus fight; as this progressed, the broader character of the struggle could be made evident to them. Despite overwhelming forces drawn up against them—the government and capitalist class, the Socialists and liberals—the Communists and the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League were able, during the long weeks in Washington, to infuse the bonus marchers with the realization that the issue of unemployment relief should be tied up with the bonus, that they were an integral part of the unemployed masses.

The final proof of the reactionary nature of the liberal-Socialist opposition to the bonus is the effect of the march on the country's unemployed. As they saw the marchers dig in in Washington, the unemployed grew ready to follow their inspiring example. This was why the government gave up trying to disintegrate the bonus army by methods less spectacular than the use of troops. There were already large bands of unemployed on the road to Washington; had the bonus army not been driven out, veterans and their fellow-unemployed to the number of a million would have been in Washington when Congress convened in December, and their presence there would have brought unemployment insurance immediately to the fore in the order of the day. Mr. Villard and the Socialists who opposed the bonus aided effectively in shaping public opinion to a point where the government dared drive the bonus army out; and they thus effectively impeded the fight for unemployment insurance which they claim to advocate. As I write, the bonus marchers and the hunger marchers are again on the road to Washington; and the liberals and Socialists are again, objectively, in the enemy camp.

New York, December 1 Felix Morrow

Contributors to This Issue

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Books, Films, Drama

On Translating Homer

The Odyssey of Homer. Newly translated into English prose by T. E. Shaw (Lawrence of Arabia). Oxford University Press. $3.50.

"THE twenty-eighth English rendering of the Odyssey" modestly begins the Translator's Note to this volume, "can hardly be a literary event." Yet no one who reads this rendering can escape the feeling that it *is* a literary event. It would be so, perhaps, if only because of the interest in its remarkable translator, that Colonel T. E. Lawrence who began his career as a scholar and archaeologist, proved himself during the war to be a real military genius and leader, revealed after it his powers as a first-rate story-teller and one of the finest writers of English prose in our day, and then chose, out of resentment and remorse at the treatment of the Arabs whom he had led, to retire, under the name of Private T. E. Shaw, to what eventually became a notorious obscurity as a mechanic in the British Air Force. Nearly all the other great figures of the war, even those who played the most prominent parts, are comparatively uninteresting as minds or personalities; the figure of Colonel Lawrence has already become half-legendary. The fascination of this personality alone, as I say, would have made the present book a literary event; but it seems to me that even if the translator's name had never been heard before, this volume would be destined to rank among the half-dozen most eminent translations of the Odyssey in English.

At least three qualifications are needed in anyone who presumes to judge a translation: first, a complete and exact knowledge of the language from which the translation is made; second, an acute sensitiveness to literary values; and, third, a sound theory of what a translation should achieve or attempt. The present reviewer finds it embarrassing even to set down these qualifications, for he is—to go no further—without the first and most important of them: he cannot read Greek. Yet several considerations give him the courage at least to discuss the present book. And the first of them is that no man living is *fully* qualified to render final judgment on a translation of the Odyssey. Greek scholars, to begin with, cannot agree even upon the simple meaning of some of the simple words: most of the translators, for example, refer consistently to the goddess Athene (or Minerva) as "gray-eyed," while Professor A. T. Murray, who made the close translation for the Loeb Classical Library, translates γλαυκῶπις constantly as "flashing-eyed," and remarks in a footnote: "If color is meant it is almost certainly *blue*." (That, incidentally, is the color that Pope used.) When one turns from simple denotation to *con*notation, to all the subtle implications and emotive attitudes that clustered about "Homer's" words as they were understood by his contemporaries, even the greatest Greek scholars must confess themselves to be in the dark. Again, it is only by the rarest chance that a great Greek scholar happens to be also not a pedant but a great or at least a finely sensitive critic; the Englishmen and Americans in whom this union could be said to exist today could perhaps be counted on the fingers of one hand. Finally, various authorities have contended for several plausible but conflicting theories regarding precisely what the translator of Homer should aim to do, and it is by no means easy to decide among these theories.

There is, for example, the initial question of whether Homer should be translated into verse or prose. One does not have to be able to read Homer in the original to recognize that a prose translation involves a let-down so considerable as to amount at times almost to travesty: one need merely make the experiment of reducing to a prose paraphrase some fine passage of Milton or Shakespeare. A verse translation, on the other hand, particularly if it is rhymed verse, compels the translator constantly to depart from any literal rendering: he is forced to distort here and there, to leave out, and to fill in. If he is a man of great talents, he may hope, like Chapman, Pope, or Worsley, to create a half-independent work of art; if he is without great poetic talents of his own, he had better stick to prose.

But even if he decides upon a prose rendering, the translator's difficulties have only begun. He has to decide what kind of prose will best convey the spirit of the original. This raises the prior question of what the spirit of the original really is. In this connection Lawrence's preface to the present translation is worth quoting at length. He begins by calling the Odyssey "neat, close-knit, artful, and various; as nearly word-perfect as midnight oil and pumice can effect." He continues:

> Crafty, exquisite, homogeneous—whatever great art may be, these are not its attributes. In this tale every big situation is burked and the writing is soft. The shattered Iliad yet makes a masterpiece; while the Odyssey by its ease and interest remains the oldest book worth reading for its story and the first novel of Europe. Gay, fine, and vivid it is: never huge or terrible. Book XI, the Underworld, verges toward "terribilita"—yet runs instead to the seed of pathos, that feeblest mode of writing. The author misses his every chance of greatness, as must all his faithful translators.
>
> This limitation of the work's scope is apparently conscious. Epic belongs to early man, and this Homer lived too long after the heroic age to feel assured and large. . . .
>
> In four years of living with this novel I have tried to deduce the author from his self-betrayal in the work. I found a bookworm, no longer young, living from home, a mainlander, city-bred and domestic. Married but not exclusively, a dog-lover, often hungry and thirsty, dark-haired. Fond of poetry, a great if uncritical reader of the Iliad. . . .
>
> No farmer, he had learned the points of a good olive tree. He is all adrift when it comes to fighting, and had not seen deaths in battle. . . .
>
> His pages are steeped in a queer naivety; and at our remove of thought and language we cannot guess if he is smiling or not. Yet there is a dignity which compels respect and baffles us, he being neither simple in education nor primitive socially. His generation so rudely admired the Iliad that even to misquote it was a virtue. . . .
>
> Very bookish, this house-bred man. His work smells of the literary coterie, of a writing tradition. . . . He, like William Morris, was driven by his age to legend. . . . Only, with more verbal felicity than Morris, he had less poetry. . . .

It is difficult not to regard this preface as mannered and affected, even smart-alecky. If the Odyssey is as bad as some of this comment implies, indeed, one begins to wonder just why Lawrence went to the trouble of making, by his own count, the twenty-eighth English translation of it. Moreover, there is no more reason to suppose that the author of the Odyssey was the kind of man Lawrence so confidently describes than there is to suppose, as Samuel Butler no less confidently did, that "he" was a young, unmarried woman. Perhaps even less reason; for Butler supported his inference with a wealth of arguments that were not only ingenious but, in their totality, impressive; while Lawrence expects you to take his word for it.

Yet some of Lawrence's criticisms of the Odyssey are shrewdly penetrating, as Butler's often are, and the comments of both men suggest important questions which the older critics, because of the very excess of awe with which they approached a work of such antiquity, failed to raise. The suspicion keeps constantly recurring to me, as I read the story, that the Odyssey

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is not heroic, but mock heroic, and intended to be so. It would be impossible to set down here all the reasons for this belief. But consider the story itself. A middle-aged gentleman takes twenty years to return to his wife: the first ten of these he spends fighting a war; during eight of them he is unavoidably detained by a charming lady who becomes his mistress: he hates it, of course, but what is a man to do? Of the other two years, at least one is spent with another charming lady with whom he has similar relations. Nevertheless, he always refers to these ten years as years of terrible tribulation: he professes to have moaned every day to return to his wife. His wife, meanwhile, who has become a middle-aged lady, speaks *ad nauseam* about her virtue, and affects to weep at least once a day, not to speak of the nights, for the return of her husband; meanwhile she entertains no fewer than 108 "suitors" in her house, and professes to be unable to get rid of a single one of them. Throughout, the contrast between protestation and action on the part of all the chief characters, between the loftiness of the language used by them and about them and the pettiness and meanness of their real aims, is so violent that it would seem impossible for anyone to miss it. Again, the more preposterous of Odysseus's adventures, such as the episode with the Cyclops and the trip to Hades, are not told by the author of the poem but related by Odysseus himself; it is hard not to think of him as the ancestor of Baron Munchausen. The central situation of the poem—that of guests who have overstayed their welcome, and refuse to take the broadest hints—would surely not appeal to an epic poet as an ideal one for tragic or heroic treatment; it is a situation for farce-comedy. True, there is much bloody business in the end, when noble Odysseus murders the defenseless suitors for the crime of—being spongers! Shortly after which he calmly announces that he will replace the sheep they ate by making a few indiscriminate raids around the countryside. It is, of course, as Lawrence hints, impossible to know through the barriers of time and language to what extent the author of the Odyssey may have been ironic, but the reader who believes unquestioningly that "Homer" was so incredibly naive as to set all this down quite piously, must be somewhat naive himself. We should never lose sight of the possibility that the Odyssey, for all the real nobility and beauty of its language, may be a mock-heroic novel of the same genre as Fielding's "Jonathan Wild."

This brings us back to the question of translation. It was Samuel Butler's emphatic contention that "a translation should depart hardly at all from the modes of speech current in the translator's own times," and his own translation of the Odyssey was based on that theory. Against this, however, is the strong possibility that the Greek of the Odyssey was intentionally archaic even when the poem was first composed. Butcher and Lang, who deliberately translated it into the language of the King James Bible, pointed out that the Greek Epic dialect was never a spoken language. And their rendering is a noble one, while that of Butler, who translated everything into colloquial and stereotyped English, is the most vulgar of all the well-known translations. The Odyssey is heroic or it is mock-heroic; in either case Butler's translation misses the point.

The Lawrence translation is more difficult to describe. A flavor of the archaic is in it everywhere—as, indeed, it is in Lawrence's own style in "Revolt in the Desert"—but it is shot through, also, with modernisms and even with shreds of slang—"intriguing charm—butler—as goddess to god you ask me—where did she pick him up?—she made him wise to things—in a class by himself." Yet the total effect is one of great dignity and beauty. Matthew Arnold held that there were in Homer four great qualities: he is eminently rapid, eminently plain and direct in expression, eminently plain and direct in ideas, and eminently noble. A satisfactory translation, he held, must convey all these qualities, and so he felt obliged to reprove Cowper for his elaborate Miltonic manner, Pope for his literary artificial manner, and Chapman for his mist of Elizabethan fancifulness. It is futile to guess what he would have thought of this rendering by Lawrence, but certainly it is one not lacking in pace, in plainness and directness, or in nobility. It has less softness, more vigor and color, than the Butcher and Lang translation. Of its faithfulness I am not competent to speak, except as that may be surmised by a comparison with such other translations as the Butcher and Lang, A. T. Murray, Samuel Butler, Chapman, Pope, Cowper, and Bryant. But it seems to me more delightful in itself than any other prose translation I have read, or even than any verse translation except the Chapman. There is room for only one quotation to indicate its quality, and I ask the reader to compare this with the corresponding passage in any other rendering and say whether Lawrence suffers by it. It is at the point where, Odysseus having asked Calypso to let him return to his wife, the goddess reminds him that he is losing his chance for immortality, and that Penelope is certainly no better looking than she is:

> In his worldly wisdom great Odysseus answered, "O Queen and Divinity, hold this not against me. In my true self I do most surely know how far short of you discreet Penelope falls in stature and in comeliness. For she is human: and you are changeless, immortal, ever-young. Yet even so I choose—yea, all my days are consumed in longing—to travel home and see the day of my arrival dawn. If a god must shatter me upon the wine-dark sea, so be it. I shall suffer with a high heart; for my courage has been tempered to endure all misery. Already have I known every mood of pain and travail, in storms and in the war. Let the coming woe be added to the count of those which have been." The sun fell and twilight deepened as he spoke. They rose and went far into the smooth-walled cave—to its very end: and there by themselves they took their joy of one another in the way of love, all night.

HENRY HAZLITT

The Tragic John Brown

God's Angry Man. By Leonard Ehrlich. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS once remarked that there were but two great tragic figures in American history, John Brown and Abraham Lincoln—one the raider of Harper's Ferry, the other the Emancipator; one the only American ever executed for treason to a State; the other the cementer of the Union. Never did any man's end furnish clearer proof of the folly of rulers than John Brown's. Virginia stamped him as a common criminal and gave him the felon's death which is supposed forever to sully the memory of the executed. Abraham Lincoln dismissed him with the thought that his was merely another case of an enthusiast brooding over "the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt which ends in little else than his own execution." Instead, his hanging made Brown a martyr and a hero, an inspiration during every hour of the Civil War to every man who wore the blue. It blotted out all Brown's strange inconsistencies, the bloodiness of his methods, the half-mad character of his undertakings, so purposeless and yet so astonishingly purposeful. It made people by the million feel with John A. Andrew of Massachusetts that whether Brown's enterprise was "wise or foolish, right or wrong . . . John Brown himself is right."

Ever since his death there has raged a battle of books about John Brown. Two years ago there appeared a bitter attack in the spirit of the Virginia of Governor Henry A. Wise, portraying Brown as a common murderer half or wholly crazed, a liar, deceiver, and complete enemy of society. Now comes another

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venture into the field, this time by a young author, Leonard Ehrlich, whose first book it is. It betrays extraordinary strength and power, an amazing mastery of the written word, a tremendous sense of dramatic values, an ability to portray the scene, the period, the passions of the hour in a manner to give great promise for the future. It is an achievement all the more remarkable since Mr. Ehrlich has plainly not sprung from the New England soil that nurtured John Brown, nor from an ancestry long established on American soil. Yet he has taken hold of the John Brown epic and reshaped it with the skill of a genuine artist, so that the narrative sweeps along almost irresistibly. That at times the style is overdone is true. It would call for supreme art not to paint the picture too sensationally, not to pile on the agony too strongly in spots. None the less this is literature.

The most serious defect in Mr. Ehrlich's book is that it reshapes the story so vividly and earnestly that it is bound to mislead public opinion as to John Brown. It is called a novel, yet it is without romance in the usual sense. It is a prose dramatization made with a poet's skill but a poet's license. Yet it is not so clearly fiction as to make the reader who is unfamiliar with Brown's story understand that it is fiction; that many of the words put into the mouths of most of the characters are imagined, although in general the story follows the accepted lines. Especially is there danger in connection with the Pottowatomie murders. There Mr. Ehrlich has gone farther than careful historians have ventured heretofore, largely because of his elaboration of that Kansas tragedy and his really superb dramatization of it. To obtain his effects he has—as he clearly states in his foreword—telescoped letters of John Brown, as well as events, thus resorting to the same method used by Frank Sanborn in his book—a method which created a fictitious Brown in what purported to be truthful history. Every purchaser of this book should be compelled to read the foreword not once but several times to understand that this does not purport to be history, but a free and vigorous adaptation of history for the purpose of dramatizing one of the two greatest American tragedies.

Barring this, the work is a remarkable achievement. Perhaps in his next book Mr. Ehrlich may be able to dramatize history without swerving from the facts.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

Other Italys

Winters of Content. By Osbert Sitwell. J. B. Lippincott Company. $3.50.

WITH each new book Osbert Sitwell gains further rights to consideration as a prose writer. His work will either annoy to distraction, as it obviously annoys Mr. Wyndham Lewis, or it will receive a critical estimate, but some attention in this country it seems bound to get. The present volume offers a good example of his strangely laden, richly colored talent, of his sense of the grotesque, of his feeling for forms, and of his poet's gift of metaphor. Like his earlier "Discursions," this book is a series of essays on many of those centuries and cities, people and monuments, of Italy which Ruskin and the medievalists have managed so effectively to make the world forget. But Mr. Sitwell makes no formal crusade; he goes on a holiday to Italy which permits him to dwell equally on Palladio's villas near Venice, Bologna's sausage, Barletta's unknown emperor, the gala-books of Naples, and the last of the cosy, musical Bourbons at Colorno.

Here, in fact, is much of the best of Mr. Sitwell's prose and enough of the worst. Many of his highly involved sentences get so out of hand that they give no indication of English prose ever having been freed of Latinisms, and the persistent, awkward, archaic use of the pronoun "himself" as subject nominative seems inexcusable. That these are senseless affectations is evident when they are compared with his descriptions of the landscape about Castel del Monte, with his excursions in associations between Parma and the oleanders blooming in the dry river-beds of Spain, between Brindisi and the advance of malaria along the Appian Way to Rome, with his clear, sure statement of the rococo in the present as in the past. In such passages his style is at its best and needs no defense. Here his prose moves with vigor as well as formal grace, and here are to be found some of the most provocative of contemporary images.

FLORENCE CODMAN

The Rise of the Union

The March of Democracy. By James Truslow Adams. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

HAVING made an important contribution to an understanding of New England in the earlier volumes of his history of that region, and having more recently, in "The Epic of America," offered a kind of philosophical interpretation of the development of the American people, Mr. Adams has now set himself to write a popular two-volume general narrative which, in addition to telling the whole American story from the beginning to the present time, shall "hold the balance even" between an older type of history which often erred by its omissions, and a newer type which records "the voices and motives of the market-place" or offers "a picturesque account of manners and art and thought."

The result, as far as this first volume is concerned, is an interesting combination of old-fashioned method and some new-fashioned accompaniments. Doubtless it is difficult to give to American history, made up as it is of a national stream and the many separate streams of colonies and States, a distinct impression of unity, but there was nevertheless place for a work which should do for the average reader the service which the Beards' "Rise of American Civilization" does for readers whose equipment is larger and more mature. Mr. Adams has achieved only a moderate success in meeting this need. The present volume, while distinctly readable, is in substance not much more than an intelligent compilation, in the main on accustomed lines. It passes rapidly over the colonial beginnings, recounts briefly the events and consequences of the intercolonial wars, takes a look at various aspects of American life on the eve of the Revolution before tracing the course of the Revolutionary struggle, and goes on with the recognized periods and important events of the constitutional era to 1860, all pretty much as other books have done. It also calls attention to the early frontier and its influence, surveys sympathetically the social characteristics of the slaveholding South, and finds room for more than the usual amount and variety of information about literature, art, social habits, religion, trade, industry, and other non-political matters. Here and there the narrative seems to hurry, as if Mr. Adams found the topic uninteresting, and it does not stop long over any of the greater moments in which the national attention was specially arrested. It would be superfluous to say that the book is useful and informing; it is both, but it shows no unusual grasp of the subject and no special skill in presenting it.

Most historians have had opinions and prejudices, and those of Mr. Adams are more often than not both open and emphatic. He has to take shots at the early New England temper, noting of course its intolerance, remarking that the founding of Harvard College "tended to increase the provincialism of New England by encouraging it to keep students at home," and making the quite extraordinary observation, referring to Ticknor, Pres-

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cott, Motley, Palfrey, Parkman, Hildreth, and Bancroft, that "it is odd . . . how little they were concerned for the most part with American history outside of their own provincial section." His severest denunciation is reserved for the Abolitionists, the Northern Abolitionists of about 1860 being characterized as "neither statesmen nor genuine humanitarians but madmen bent upon burning down the whole national structure in a conflagration of hate in order that their own brand of fanaticism might be made to prevail." Against such blemishes, and a few minor errors of fact probably due to haste, are to be set some just estimates of political leaders and their causes and a healthy contempt for some patriotic traditions. The profuse illustrations merit high praise for their appropriateness and variety.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

Rummaging in Africa

Filibusters in Barbary. By Wyndham Lewis. Robert M. McBride and Company. $3.50.

THE usual travel book which Mr. Wyndham Lewis works so hard not to write in his "Filibusters in Barbary" aims to be enthusiastic, friendly, and useful, a guide at long range chatting industriously to earn his fee. Mr. Lewis succeeds in being different, and in succeeding manages to be a little more interesting and a little more worth reading than the usual travel book, but not much more. An irritatingly smart manner and a hyper-rhetorical style spoil most of the pleasure. Mr. Lewis is supercilious, unfriendly, and by guidebook standards useless, but he manages to be entertaining now and then. If he were less self-consciously the satirist at large, the pleasure he gives might be many times multiplied.

In searching for reasons why a writer of the reputation and talents of Mr. Lewis satisfies us so little, we may perhaps find them in the excuse he gives for his journey. He traveled not for the love of it, but because "the atmosphere of our dying European society is to me profoundly depressing—some relief is necessary from the daily spectacle of those expiring Lions and Eagles who obviously will never recover from the deathblows they dealt each other (foolish beasts and birds) from 1914 to 1918; and all the money they owe our dreary chums the Bankers for that expensive encounter. I thought I would not take the beaten track to Russia, but to a less controversial spot."

Mr. Lewis's travels, therefore, are an effort to escape, and he does not escape. It is as if a nerve cell in a dying body tried to free itself and could not. Mr. Lewis's comments are drearily empty and despairingly cynical—an attempt to stand solitary and superior which ends as a standing nowhere and a superiority to nothing. The refusal to take "the beaten track to Russia," not only physically but in his mind, drives him to rummage among the debris of African cultures for a faith. His rummaging brings him nothing fresher or more solid than a faith in nomadism as the ideal state of human society and a puerile admiration for Marshal Lyautey, "that great governor, that old Roman," who organized and solidified the North African empire of France. It was a remarkable achievement, no doubt, but it is a doomed achievement. The world needs rather to be rid of its "old Romans" than to breed more of them.

A sensualist—that is, to continue my metaphor, an intestinal cell—might escape the agony of our dying civilization; but a nerve cell—that is, an artist—cannot escape. A man working with ideas cannot escape it; he must face it even if it pushes him on "the beaten track to Russia." So long as he tries to evade it, Mr. Lewis will condemn his undoubted talents to futility.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

Shorter Notices

The Haunted Mirror. By Elizabeth Madox Roberts. The Viking Press. $2.50.

The special quality of Miss Roberts's writing here as elsewhere is to be discovered in her prose, a highly cultivated literary prose that is saved from being merely conventional by a tactful use of local words and idioms assimilated from her regional background. Almost always Miss Roberts is as intensely preoccupied with finding the exact verbal equivalent for her characters' thoughts and feelings as the most fastidious lyric poet. Whether Miss Roberts concentrates so much on language because she is principally engaged in translating delicate states of subjective experience, or whether she concentrates on such states because she is principally interested in language, one cannot be certain; but one feels once more too strong a hierarchy of language in her work, a preference for effects of style over possible effects of characterization or situation. The result is that all these stories seem in one way or another unrealized as narratives, however exquisite they may be as specimens of poetic style. Her characters are projected at some moment of unusual awareness before experience: the moment of awakening, in the rather overrated Sacrifice of the Maidens; the moment of violence, in Record at Oak Hill; or the moment of death, in Death at Bearwallow. Such crises of the inner history Miss Roberts renders with a delicate intensity of perception; but unrealized as they are in any outer conflict or action, these alone are insufficient to satisfy the reader's still naive insistence on a story that will answer to the Aristotelian demands of a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Blood of the Lamb. By Matthew Mark. The Mohawk Press. $2.

Veiled in pseudonymity, a member of the A. E. F. and the American Legion describes with appalling realism the brutalities unleashed by the patriotic command for wholesale murder. His pictures of the inhuman cruelty vented upon conscientious objectors, of sadism parading the training camps in officers' uniforms, and of decent citizens transformed by the mass spirit of war into callous assassins, have a horrible starkness. Primarily an indictment of militarism, the book is also a satire on the American political and social scene for the past three decades under Presidents Robust, Magnum, Wisdom, Goodfellow, Doolittle, and Superman. A slender thread of symbolical narrative binds the book together. The principal character, Minus, is an avatar of Jesus, although he takes on at times the aspect of a famous insurgent Senator. His logical arraignment of war and his continued attacks upon authority result in his arrest for sedition and his execution in the electric chair in company with two murderers. The strongest part of the book is in the unforgettable scenes of blood-lust, based presumably on the author's experiences.

My Friendly Contemporaries. A Literary Log. By Hamlin Garland. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

This, the third volume of Mr. Garland's reminiscences dealing with his so-called literary life, should have been subtitled "A Literary Lag." As he proceeds down the years he has less and less to say about literature as it is understood by the present generation and more and more to say about the "official" writers who are so entirely passé that many youngsters do not even recognize their names. The result is an incredible, weird, hair-raising, sad, silly, irritating, nonsensical, ignorant, and completely fascinating book. Since it covers the years from 1914 to 1922, one would naturally expect that it would record something about the writers who remade American literature during those very

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years. Not at all. Cabell is mentioned very incidentally, O'Neill only occasionally; Vachel Lindsay seems to have won Garland's guarded approval and Robert Frost his genuine regard; but Dreiser, Mencken, Sandburg, Anderson, and the rest are not mentioned at all. Carl Van Doren is the only critic with a leaning toward the moderns for whom Garland has the slightest tolerance. For the rest he tries to find the American tradition in Rupert Hughes, Joseph Lincoln, Edwin Markham, Herman Hagedorn, Zona Gale, plus the members of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. As to the English, he approves of Barrie, Shaw, and Kipling among the older writers and only of A. A. Milne among the younger. All his well-known prejudices are exploited to the full: that the young are pornographers, that literature is an affair of Y. M. C. A. homiletics, that the Nordic myth is revealed truth, that the Southern European peasants and the Jews are ruining the country, that the American Academy is the true repository of American literary virtues, and the like. Mr. Garland's book is a gorgeous example of the "official" mind in decay.

Talleyrand. By Duff Cooper. Harper and Brothers. $3.75.

This is the best biography of Talleyrand that has been published in English. It is based on very thorough research, and though Mr. Cooper has a great admiration for his hero, he does not hide his blemishes or distort facts. He succeeds in showing that Talleyrand was a much more honest and public-spirited person than he has usually been considered. The style of the book is vivid and epigrammatic, though the periods are apt to be oratorical and the epigrams commonplace—one remembers that the author is an active member of the English Parliament. If Mr. Cooper is not a great writer, he is a very readable one.

Caste and Race in India. By G. S. Ghurye. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.

This book is a careful study of the nature, history, origin, and modern aspects of the caste system. It reviews the theories of other scholars, though briefly, and adds to their work particularly in the discussion of anthropometric data meant to show that caste arose in the north of India among the Aryans, who sought thereby to preserve their racial integrity. Since the political as well as social problem of the untouchables in India today is a problem of caste, Dr. Ghurye treats it at length, agreeing in the main with Gandhi and other members of the Indian National Congress Party that it would be advisable to separate them politically from the mass of Hinduism. A solution of this important Indian problem demands a knowledge of the wider subject of caste, and Dr. Ghurye's scholarly book has therefore an interest not only for sociologists but also for students of India's political complex. His text may serve as a general guide, and wider reading may be directed by the excellent bibliography.

Our Neurotic Age. A Consultation. Edited by Samuel D. Schmalhausen. Farrar and Rinehart. $4.

The distinguished consultants—twenty-six of them—who contribute to this volume agree upon one point: the patient is in a bad way. "The deep unsolved problem," says Dr. Schmalhausen, "is whether a social order is being liquidated or whether civilization itself is sliding over a precipice into a dark abyss. . . . Life is struggling to emerge from emotional bondages, social inhibitions, economic cleavages that are preventing the full-statured emergence of the humanness in man's human nature and of the civilizing power in man's civilization." And unless something is done about it, at least so some of the doctors think, disaster impends. Some of them, like Dr. Robert Briffault, believe that a radical remaking of ancient institutions is necessary to the patient's recovery. There may be a less violent cure in education. But the value of these discussions lies rather in their acute diagnoses than in any suggestion of remedies. "Scientific knowledge," it has been well said, "enables us to do three things: to understand, to predict, and to improve our lot." Obviously, understanding must come first. These essays are valuable contributions toward the understanding of the patient's condition. The book falls into four parts: an inquiry, Is the Normal Mind Sane?—the answer to which is somewhat vague; a discussion, Beyond Normality, of admitted eccentricities; an investigation of The Social Background of Neurosis; and, finally, under the heading Ecce Homo Sapiens, an analysis of human stupidities. The contributors include Joseph Jastrow, Ernest Jones, John J. B. Morgan, Lorine Pruette, V. F. Calverton, Ernest Sutherland Bates, and Frances and Mason Merrill.

Saint-Just. By Geoffrey Bruun. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

This brief life of Antoine Saint-Just is less a biography than a short historical survey of an important crisis in the progress of the French Revolution. Mr. Bruun's study of the events leading up to the virtual dictatorship of Robespierre is interesting and historically sound but definitely colored by his acceptance of the conventional portrait of Robespierre as a curious monster. His attitude toward Saint-Just is unresolved, and in the progress of his book Saint-Just's inconsistencies are never welded into a harmonious character—yet he treats Saint-Just with far more tolerance than the majority of unsympathetic historians. There is always a tendency to forget that Robespierre and Saint-Just were not fiends but social philosophers of extraordinary perception and precocity. Saint-Just in mid-career was scarcely more than a boy, and the fact that he was able to direct the revolutionary army at Fleurus is adequate proof of his remarkable executive genius. In a final sense both Robespierre and Saint-Just were inferior politicians—yet they were forerunners of a revolutionary type that has more recently produced a Lenin and a Stalin.

Films

A Novel Idea

SOMETIMES it is art that copies nature, and sometimes, as we have learned from Oscar Wilde, it is nature that copies art. In the case of "If I Had a Million" (Rivoli) the situation is somewhat more complicated. The film itself is, with some allowance, a fairly creditable attempt at verisimilitude. It is safe to predict, however, that its effect upon life, if it has any, will be the reverse of Wilde's dictum. Instead of inducing people to copy its art, it will make them mend their ways and thus destroy the very "nature" which has provided it with its material and moral. I refer in particular to the refusal of some of the characters portrayed in the film to credit the genuineness of the million-dollar checks which have been presented to them by an eccentric millionaire. After the film has completed its round of the movie theaters of the country, there will be very few people, I am sure, incredulous enough to regard such gifts as worthless paper, and probably no keeper of a doss house will, in the future, light his cigarette with a genuine million-dollar check.

Of the other possible effects of "If I Had a Million" I can speak with much less confidence. Were Hollywood as capable of grasping the moral of this film as the public is likely to be, the production of "If I Had a Million" would mark an important advance toward a more intelligent conception of what constitutes an interesting film story. For the film is different from the usual run. Unfolding a series of independent episodes

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related to one another only through the general premise of what people are likely to do when they suddenly become rich, "If I Had a Million" proves conclusively that an interesting idea has as much power to cast a spell over the mind of the audience as any amount of complications in the dramatic plot. In the case of the film under review this power is demonstrated in spite of the mediocre quality of many of the individual stories which make up the narrative. If the film can only succeed in convincing Hollywood that intelligence adds value to its productions, it will have performed an important service in raising American films from the mire of cheap sentiment and hokum.

That the latter two ingredients are much in evidence in Cecil De Mille's "Sign of the Cross" (Rialto) is only what would be expected from the work of this stalwart of the Hollywood tradition. The film is frankly a "spectacle," with all the pyrotechnic display of the splendors and horrors of Rome during the days of Christian martyrdom to which we became accustomed in the silent examples of this type. Of its kind, the film is probably as good as any of its predecessors, and if one can believe in its Romans and Christians, one will find it sufficiently entertaining and at times perhaps even thrilling. I can only wish that somebody would give us a picture of Roman life that would show some genuine insight into the psychology and mode of living of those days. We have had a surfeit of cheap oleographs.

"With Williamson Beneath the Sea" (Cameo), a picture of submarine fauna and flora, gives an interesting and vivid account of the unfamiliar life under water. Some of its episodes strike one as having been specially staged, but this takes away little from the informative value of the picture.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

Drama

The Lower Depths

ONE of the most discouraging features of this discouraging season is the way in which our playwrights keep returning to the moods and the patterns of previous successes. Actual revivals have been much more common than usual, but more common still are plays which are new in nothing but name. Authors and producers alike seem afraid to try anything that has not been tried before, and they seem, besides, incapable of grasping the simple paradox which states that the only way to repeat a novelty is with something else. It is true that "Dinner at Eight" won success by being more or less like "Grand Hotel." It is also true that "When Ladies Meet" drew crowds by being even more like all of its author's previous plays. But these are exceptions, and a good half of the season's flat failures were plays immediately classifiable as imitations of something else. A great many of them were, moreover, inferior copies of models which originally had nothing but novelty to recommend them, and they represent only a further vulgarization of conceptions which were vulgar enough to begin with.

Consider for example "The Great Magoo" (Selwyn Theater). Like many other plays, it would, of course, never have been written had it not been for "Broadway." And though no imitation of that diverting tour de force has been anything like so good as the original, few if any have been as positively or as aggressively bad as this cheap and lurid cartoon by Ben Hecht and Gene Fowler. The Abbott-Dunning opus achieved a certain novelty by mingling raucousness with sentimentality against the background furnished by the world of cheap entertainers. The authors themselves failed this year in an attempt to do the same thing again, but "The Great Magoo" tries

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BIOGRAPHY. Guild Theater. To be reviewed next week.

CIVIC REPERTORY THEATER. Eva Le Gallienne in repertory which includes "Liliom," "Camille," "Dear Jane," and a new production, "Alice in Wonderland," which will be reviewed later.

CRIMINAL AT LARGE. Belasco Theater. Exciting and credible tale of crime in a country house. One superb performance.

DINNER AT EIGHT. Music Box Theater. Trick melodrama about what happened to the various guests invited to a dinner party. The general public likes it very much better than I do.

THE DU BARRY. George M. Cohan Theater. Grace Moore sings beautifully in an elaborate but commonplace operetta.

FIREBIRD. Empire Theater. Beautiful production of a highly theatrical play from the Hungarian.

MADEMOISELLE. Playhouse. Alice Brady and Grace George make a sentimental comedy pleasant enough.

MUSIC IN THE AIR. Alvin Theater. Pleasant operetta with music by Jerome Kern and a book rather better than average.

SUCCESS STORY. Maxine Elliott Theater. What happened to a radical when he rose in business. The best drama of the season.

THE LATE CHRISTOPHER BEAN. Henry Miller Theater. Light comedy from the French completely rewritten by Sidney Howard and charmingly played by Pauline Lord and others. All things considered, it is much the most enjoyable comedy of the season.

WHEN LADIES MEET. Royale Theater. A very popular sermon by Rachel Crothers.

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to go them one better—by the simple process of mingling greater raucousness with more abandoned sentimentality against the background furnished by the world of even cheaper entertainers. Besides two or three assorted bedrooms, the eight scenes include A Coney Island Side Street, The Back Room of a Rathskeller, and The Flea Circus. The story concerns the great love of a boardwalk Casanova for a side-show stomach dancer, and after much miscellaneous copulation indulged in independently by both parties, the moral is enunciated when the two come together again in the last scene: If you are really in love it does not matter what you do. You can sit in the mud as much as you like but something bright and clean inside of you will keep on shining all the time.

A great deal of mud-sitting is done all around. The Casanova-Galahad (for he is much of both) does most of his in Coney Island. The Messalina-Beatrice does some of hers in the more elegant surroundings provided, first, by "Sacha" Weber, the orchestra conductor who leads her to Broadway, then by the rich producer who takes her for a virgin. But their hearts are breaking even in bed, and when sentiment threatens to get a little tiresome there are abundant references to lice, abortions, toilets, flatulent horses, and other delightful but forbidden subjects. Worst of all is the patent and deliberate prostitution of such talents as the authors have. Granted a mind simple enough, such abysmal sentimentality might, in a mistaken sincerity, be mingled with such deliberate dirtiness. But it is evident that the present authors do nothing of the kind, and their play lacks even the most elementary integrity. They have no respect for their audience and, apparently, very little for themselves.

According to an evening newspaper one of them explained the purpose of the play as "to make some money." It is possible that it will do just that, since there is a real public for plays considerably below the usual Broadway level, for plays which do not merely fail to be good but actually aim at an audience cruder than that at which our playwrights commonly aim. But if it does "make some money," it is not certain that the joke will be entirely upon the audience. Mr. Hecht was once taken seriously by respectable writers. He is doubtless proud of his success in writing down to a great public which he despises. But that great public has its revenges, and the writers who go down to its level often find themselves stuck there. "Facilis descensus Averno," and also "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled." Incidentally, the "magoo" of the title is said to have some obscene significance for the initiated, but I do not know what it is.

Those critics of the daily press who saw the play were probably a little sorry that, just for the sake of making a distinction, they had not been kinder to such previous entertainments as "Gay Divorce" (Ethel Barrymore Theater) and "The Mad Hopes" (Broadhurst Theater)—neither of which may be very important but both of which are amusing and completely inoffensive. The former is a light musical comedy with a farcical book and a certain suavity contributed largely by the amiable personality of Fred Astaire, the piquant charm of Betty Starbuck, and the dancing of Claire Luce. I found it entertaining in a smooth, well-mannered way, and I was also diverted by Romney Brent's extravaganza "The Mad Hopes," which deals irresponsibly with the doings of a featherbrained woman settled with her family on the Riviera. Something like "The Importance of Being Earnest" and something like "Springtime for Henry," it is not so good as either, but it is wittily written and is kept alive by an excellent cast which includes Violet Kemble Cooper, Rex O'Malley, and a very talented newcomer named Jane Wyatt. In the *Times* Mr. Atkinson suggested that what it really needed was to have all the parts played by the inimitable Mr. Brent himself. The suggestion might be a little difficult to put into practice but it is an excellent one.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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